

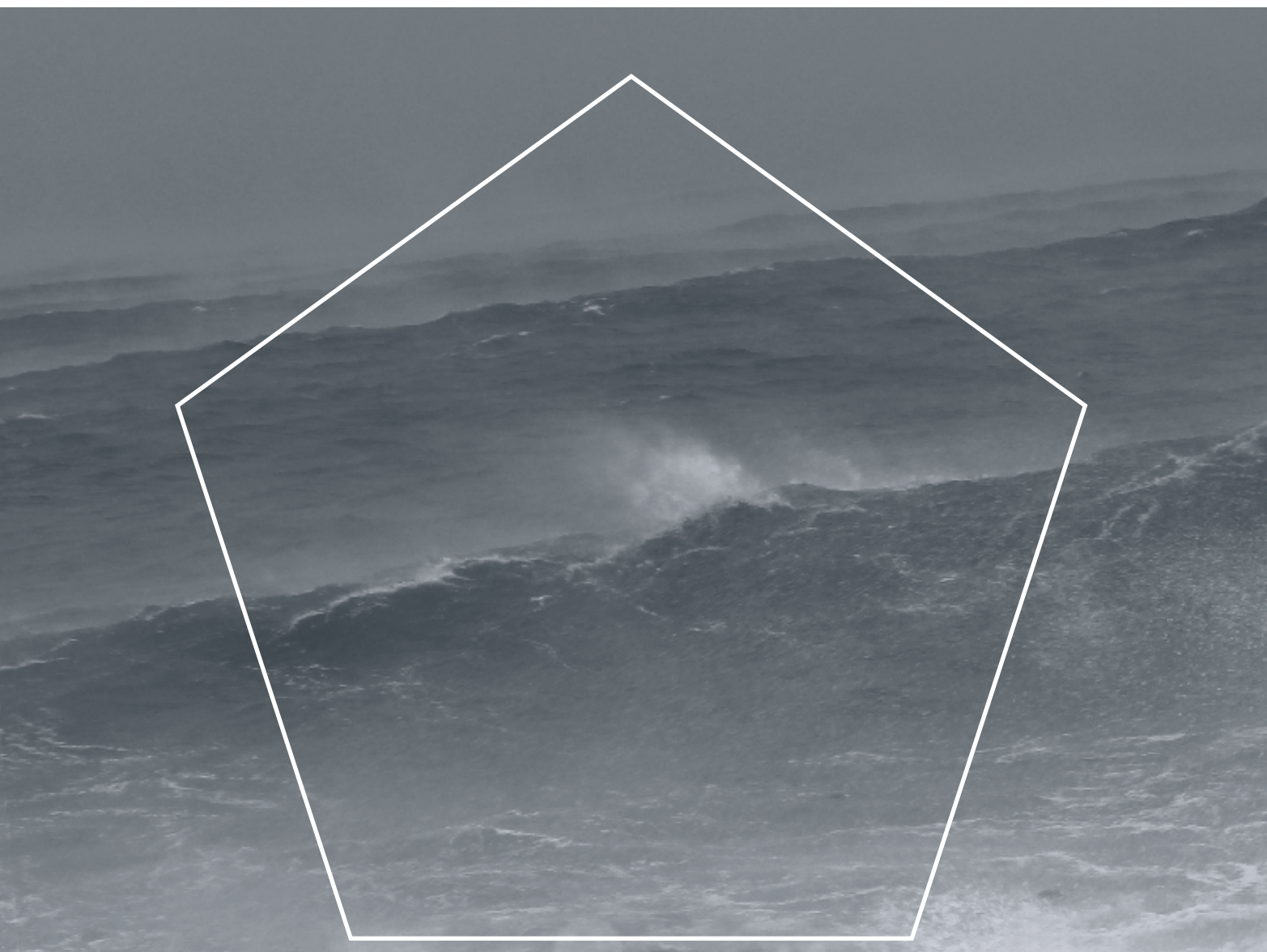
2018 number 1



pentagram

Lectorium Rosicrucianum

Transcending
to the Eternal



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No study is more important than that of the self. 'If you would ask me', Elihu teaches in *The Aquarian Gospel*, 'what to study, I would answer: study yourself; and when you will have studied it, and then would ask me what to study next, I would reply, still yourself.' [Chap. 8, verse 14] 'He who knows well his lower self, knows the illusions of the world, and knows of the things that pass away; and he who knows his higher self, knows God, and knows well the things that cannot pass away. Thrice blessed is the man who has made purity and love his very own; he has been ransomed from the perils of the lower self and is himself his higher self.' [Chap. 8, verse 15] In the One and Infinite Creator, we distinguish the attributes of Power, Intelligence and Love. The *Aquarian Gospel* explains that there are three forms of consciousness:

- The consciousness of the omnipotence of God and man;
- The Christ-consciousness or the consciousness of the divine love;
- The consciousness of the Holy Breath, or supreme intelligence.

In this issue of *Pentagram*, we study these three aspects of the One and Infinite Creator, and elucidate them on the basis of considerations of special thinkers or world teachers - always directed at the most complex but also the most relevant subject of this time: the study of the self, and the confusions of the I.

Cover and above

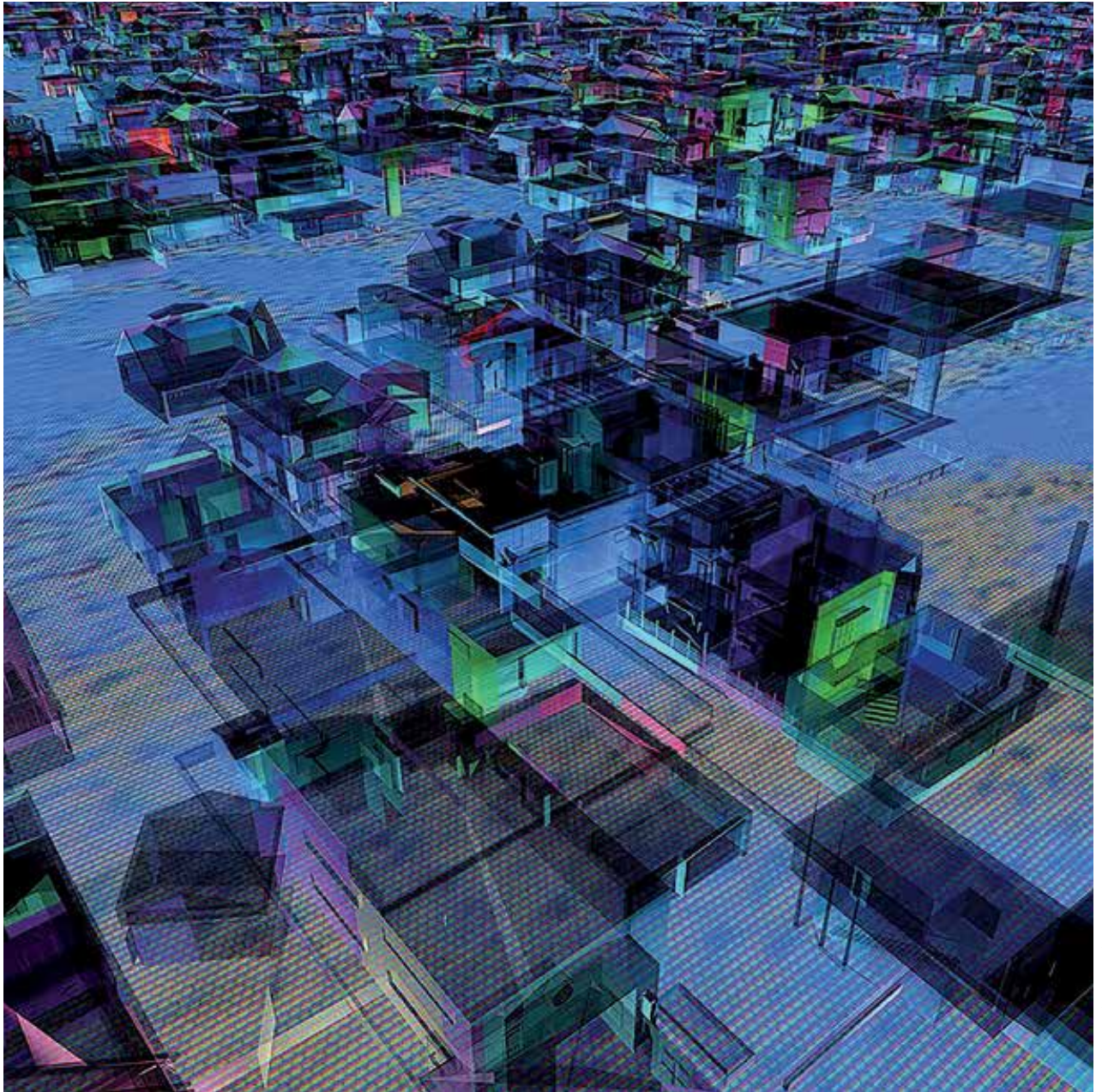
'It was a dark and stormy night,'
but what does that mean?

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Cityscape series

Digitization and rapid urbanization are the two fundamental, world shaking forces of our era. In 1900 only 10% of the world's population lived in cities, the figure is now over fifty percent and still rising. The birth of the digital era also has transformed every aspect of Being and grows exponentially. Stephen Haley began his CityScape series of digital, virtual photographs in 2004 and has averaged about one a year since. While world cities increasingly become much like each other, these works play on their repetitions and differences and are inspired by his various travels.



THE TWO OBJECTIVES OF THE GNOSIS

Soul rebirth, the first objective of the modern Spiritual School, is not yet transfiguration. The Spiritual School of the Triple Alliance of the Light has transfiguration as its main objective, that is: to become an entirely new human being. In this practice, you cannot halt at the first result, at the new soul-state, as a cork that might keep you afloat for a while. The new soul after all possesses yet another quality. If it has entered the stadium of the new soul-state, it is capable of orchestrating and realising the descent of the Spirit in the pineal centre.

The neutralization of the I

*'As a deer pants for the flowing streams,
so, too, my soul thirsts for you, oh God,
for the living God.'*

When the soul ascends on the vibration force of its great longing, it is inevitable that the spirit must connect with the radiation centre around the pineal gland. And from this centre, the seven rays of the spirit will – completely liberated, – touch the nerve ether with its sanctifying power and bring it in a state of rest.

You may imagine the great tension experienced by someone who attuned

himself to the Gnosis - who opens his heart for the radiation of the nucleus of the microcosm, which is in all respects the opposite of the personality. Called up by the I, the force that enters him is destructive to the I and all that it might cherish. Therefore, it is clear that the great battle that such a human has to fight shall begin in the heart.

The heart radiates the desires of the self-maintaining I in its central position and what is longed for is attracted by the heart. Through these functions of the heart sanctuary as they operate in every person, the heart is in constant movement, even during our sleep. Thus, the heart of a human being is very crystallised and extremely tired - there is never

J. VAN RIJCKENBORGH

Masks in the Theater of Marcellus (13 BC). Seen in the exhibition *Moi, Auguste* at the Grand Palais, Paris 2014.



a moment of quietness, of stillness. The greatest battle is always fought in the heart, by the heart and with the heart. The heart forms the great battle scene, as the *Bhagavad Gita* clearly shows us. The heart is always on the hunt, driven by the desires of the I. And because in our world the law of opposites rules, it is clear that at the same moment that these desires emanate from the heart, all sorts of counteracting factors and powers rear their head.

[...]

Thus the heart of a human being is in continuous movement and very impure. This shows especially when he connects with the Gnosis. From the standpoint of the Gnosis, no human being possesses a pure immaculate heart. For the heart has been a battlefield for such a very long time. When a person wishes to go the path, his heart must be purified, and become still. He must want to end the continuous hunting, fighting and stirring of the I. When he doesn't end these daily battles, and strivings of the heart, it will never be able to harmoniously receive the nuclear radiation of the microcosm. In that case, the nuclear radiation, breaking in, will have serious consequences. Only when the heart has become truly still, it can devote itself to the real task whereto each human being, because of his divine potential, has been called and chosen, namely the victory over death, and thus the entrance into a true new state-of-life.

Everything begins with the attitude-of-life

How does one start? How does one realise a still heart, a pure heart?

By completely withdrawing the heart from the dialectical process of life, and by dedicating it fully to the newly dawning soul process, to the nuclear radiation



The heart is always on the hunt, driven by the desires of the I

.....

that emanates from the middle of the microcosm. Can one do that? Is that possible? Yes, that can be completely realised. He who undertakes to realise this will discover that he can engage in and sustain a totally new attitude-of-life without having to force himself at all; that his life enters a different life stream upon which his ship-of-life is propelled along.

Suppose that you decide for such a new attitude-of-life, then surely the I, your nature-I, is still active within you, but in full consciousness it has then decided not to use the heart anymore for the daily games of life: the I has decided to 'make straight the pathways for his God'. It sounds a bit strange that the I will no longer use the heart for the dialectical process of life, for naturally the heart will continue with its biological functions. But nevertheless, it withdraws from the daily strife, from all dialectical emotions and struggles. The heart enters the deep peace, the peace of Bethlehem. It no longer desires dialectical things. It no longer fights against people, things and circumstances.

Yet it doesn't take an indifferent attitude toward people and circumstances. You, and thus your heart, have a choice between three directions in dialectics: you can either attract things, or repel

them, but also be completely indifferent towards them. *And that indifference toward people and things is perhaps the most horrible choice.* If you proceed to withdraw your heart from all these tenacious things, pay attention that you will not fall into the trap of indifference. The heart only longs to be no longer a participant of the *battle scenes* of life. It no longer fights against people and things and maintains this point of view in the smallest consequences. The organs of intelligence, thus without involving the heart, neatly perform all the jobs that have to be performed in order to live and to comply with your duties in society. And when you do that, you will also come to discover that you will execute them much better than ever before. [...]

Radiation from the nucleus

Furthermore, you will discover that when the I will no longer have the heart and its functions available for its whims, the self-maintaining nature from within is restrained. If you withdraw the heart from the dialectical (e)motions, and focus it on the nuclear radiation of the microcosm, you will completely lose all the self-maintaining instincts. And when you practise this new attitude of the heart, you will experience that your nerve ether enters into a great, and profound rest. You are living your life, you do your duty, but you will not want to hold onto any of it.

Please do not think that the heart has now become redundant. When viewed

Early medieval Pictish cross found
at the St. Rule's Church at Monifieth,
Angus Scotland

dialectically, you will withdraw it from the daily strife, it will come, as a matter of course to its true, God ordained task. Because the heart surrenders itself to the nuclear radiation of the microcosm, the rose will immediately begin to unfold. It is now, without resistance, attached to the cross of nature. Only then does the human being become a true Rosicrucian. When this cross is erected, it emits, inevitably, a purifying, converting activity over and within the entire personality. In short, its whole life and the entire attitude of life change. The human being begins to prove that he has become a Rosicrucian. That he has joined the Brotherhood of the Red Rosy-cross. Such a person because of his silenced heart, can only be a Rosicrucian. That is why your heart must first truly become silent, and be pointed to its true purpose: receiving and absorbing the radiation of the nucleus of the microcosm. When the heart has thus been stilled and pure, the rose opens for the universal Gnosis, and the Word can be brought to life within you. Then a great joy will come over you, a joy that will never leave you. A great and blissful happiness fills your heart and you experience an intense connectedness with everybody and everything. The first, powerful, immortal capability of the human being has been liberated, has entered the system. The spirit-soul that is of God, is then ensouled within you, and it meets in the heart, the place of ensoulment, with no resistance at all. It will now purify the heart completely. It is now able to adjust itself in great harmony to the personality and scintillate through the entire personality system, and stimulate your health and a resistance to sickness. That is the secret of being healthy throughout the process of transfiguration. That is the secret, so that even with

a body that has been weak since birth, you keep on doing your work, until a very old age.

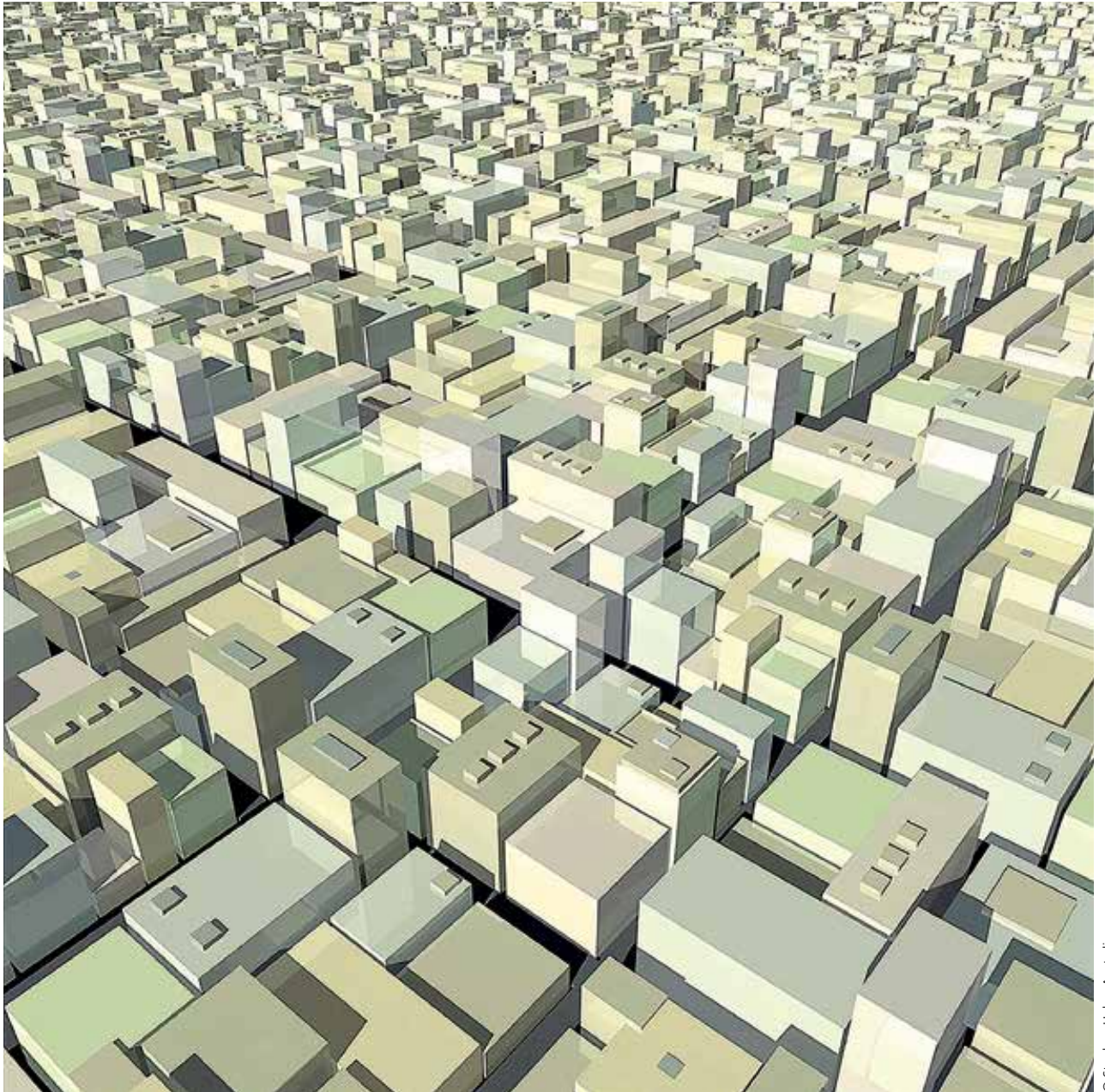
Joseph of Arimathea and Hermes

When you have entered the rose garden in this way, the classical first day of the week dawns: the first day in the court of Joseph of Arimathea. This garden is situated on a mountain. The word Arimathea means 'elevated place'. On this high place, on this mountain, the second capability of the immortalization of the new Man arises within you: The living word. The living word and the Voice then become a unity, a living, vibrating reality. The great feast of resurrection is then celebrated within you.

Born within the silence of the heart, the high place that was from the beginning is sanctified to life. The mighty riches of the Holy Grail, the Gnostic magic, can be applied. The Voice, moved by the Word, speaks – and it is created. It commands – and it stands. For through the birth, through the resurrection of the word within you, the entrance of the spirit is celebrated within you. At that moment, the seven-spirit connects with the soul and the transfiguration has really begun. You will then be able to enter through the golden gate. Wonderful dreams with an inner significance will now enlighten you.

And Hermes instructs us with regard to this process:

The soul is in the body, the spirit-soul is in the soul, the Word is in the spirit-soul and the spirit-soul is in God. The word is thus the image and the spirit-soul of God, the body is the image of the idea, and the idea is the image of the soul. ★



© Stephen Haley, Australia

'A town built on a hill cannot be hidden' (Matthew 5:14)

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'

Buddha on: identity and non-identity





In 1894 *The Gospel of Buddha* was published by the German-American theologian Paul Carus, with texts gleaned from existing Buddhist parables, fragments and traditions. Carus came from a Pietistic milieu in southern Germany and had studied at the universities of Strasbourg and Tübingen. He called himself “an atheist who loved God” and lived in hopes that, after the Armageddon of the nations in which the then reigning opposing views would end, a “cosmic religion of universal truth” would arise. The following fifty-third chapter contains a meaningful treatise on the ego.

Kutadanta, the head of the Brahmins in the village of Danamati having approached the Blessed One respectfully, greeted him and said: "I am told, O sramana, that thou art the Buddha, the Holy One, the All-knowing, the Lord of the world. But if thou wert the Buddha, wouldst thou not come like a king in all thy glory and power?"

Said the Blessed One: "Thine eyes are covered. If the eye of thy mind were undimmed thou couldst see the glory and the power of truth."

Said Kutadanta: "Show me the truth and I shall see it. But thy doctrine is without consistency. If it were consistent, it would stand; but as it is not, it will pass away." The Blessed One replied: "The truth will never pass away."

Kutadanta said: "I am told that thou teachest the law, yet thou tearest down religion. Thy disciples despise rites and abandon immolation, but reverence for the gods can be shown only by sacrifices. The very nature of religion consists in worship and sacrifice."

Said the Buddha: "Greater than the immolation of bullocks is the sacrifice of self. He who offers to the gods his evil desires will see the uselessness of slaughtering animals at the altar. Blood has no cleansing power, but the eradication of lust will make the heart pure. Better than worshipping gods is obedience to the laws of righteousness."

Kutadanta, being of a religious disposition and anxious about his fate after death, had sacrificed countless victims.

Now he saw the folly of atonement by blood. Not yet satisfied, however, the teachings of the Tathagata, Kutadanta compiled: "Thou believest, O Master, that beings are reborn, that they migrate in the evolution of life; and that subject to the

law of karma we must reap what we sow. Yet thou teachest the non-existence of the soul! Thy disciples praise utter self-extinction as the highest bliss of Nirvana. If I am merely a combination of the sankharas, my existence will cease when I die. If I am merely a compound of sensations and ideas and desires, wither can I go at the dissolution of the body?"

Said the Blessed One: "O Brahman, thou art religious and earnest. Thou art seriously concerned about thy soul. Yet is thy work in vain because thou art lacking in the one thing that is needful.

There is rebirth of character, but no transmigration of a self. Thy thought-forms reappear, but there is no ego-entity transferred. The stanza uttered by a teacher is reborn in the scholar who repeats the words.

Only through ignorance and delusion do men indulge in the dream that their souls are separate and self-existent entities.

Thy heart, O Brahman, is cleaving still to self; thou art anxious about heaven but thou seekest the pleasures of self in heaven, and thus thou canst not see the bliss of truth and the immortality of truth.

Verily I say unto thee: The Blessed One has not come to teach death, but to teach life, and thou discernest not the nature of living and dying.

This body will be dissolved and no amount of sacrifice will save it. Therefore, seek thou the life that is of the mind.

Where self is, truth cannot be; yet when truth comes, self will disappear. Therefore, let thy mind rest in the truth; propagate the truth, put thy whole will in it, and let it spread. In the truth, thou shall live forever.

Self is death and truth is life. The cleaving to self is a perpetual dying, while moving in the truth is partaking of Nirvana which is life everlasting."

Kutadanta said: "Where, O venerable Mas-

Photo pages 10-11: While in the Wat Thmei pagoda in Phnom Penh a ceremony takes place during which Buddhist monks receive sacrifices from the believers in the neighborhood, children of about nine years old wear helmets and elbow protectors and kneepads to go skateboarding. Some for the first time.

© Sidi Yansané, Paris

ter, is Nirvana?"

"Nirvana is wherever the precepts are obeyed," replied the Blessed One.

"Do I understand thee aright," rejoined the Brahman, "that Nirvana is not a place, and being nowhere it is without reality?"

"Thou dost not understand me aright," said the Blessed One, "Now listen and answer these questions: Where does the wind dwell?"

"Nowhere," was the reply.

Buddha retorted "Then, sir, there is no such thing as wind."

Kutadanta made no reply; and the Blessed One asked again: "Answer me, O Brahman, where does wisdom dwell? Is wisdom a locality?"

"Wisdom has no allotted dwelling-place," replied Kutadanta.

Said the Blessed One: "Meanest thou that there is no wisdom, no enlightenment, no righteousness, and no salvation, because Nirvana is not a locality? As a great and mighty wind which passeth over the world in the heat of the day, so the Tathagata comes to blow over the minds of mankind with the breath of his love, so cool, so sweet, so calm, so delicate; and those tormented by fever assuage their suffering and rejoice at the refreshing breeze."

Said Kutadanta: "I feel, O Lord, that thou proclaimest a great doctrine, but I cannot grasp it. Forbear with me that I ask again: Tell me, O Lord, if there be no atman, how can there be immortality? The activity of the mind passeth, and our thoughts are gone when we have done thinking."

Buddha replied: "Our thinking is gone, but our thoughts continue. Reasoning ceases, but knowledge remains."

Said Kutadanta: "How is that? Is not reasoning and knowledge the same?"

The Blessed One explained the distinction by an illustration: "It is as when a man wants, during the night, to send a letter, and, after having his clerk called, has a

lamp lit, and gets the letter written. Then, when that has been done, he extinguishes the lamp. But though the writing has been finished and the light has been put out the letter is still there. Thus, does reasoning cease and knowledge remain; and in the same way mental activity ceases, but experience, wisdom, and all the fruits of our acts endure."

Kutadanta continued: "Tell me, O Lord, pray tell me, where, if the sankharas are dissolved, is the identity of myself. If my thoughts are propagated, and if my soul migrates, my thoughts cease to be my thoughts and my soul ceases to be my soul. Give me an illustration, but pray, O Lord, tell me, where is the identity of myself?"

Said the Blessed One: "Suppose a man were to light a lamp; would it burn the night through?"

"Yes, it might do so," was the reply.

"Now, is it the same flame that burns in the first watch, of the night as in the second?"

Kutadanta hesitated. He thought "Yes, it is the same flame," but fearing the complications of a hidden meaning, and trying to be exact, he said: "No, it is not."

"Then," continued the Blessed One, "there are flames, one in the first watch and the other in the second watch."

"No, sir," said Kutadanta. "In one sense, it is not the same flame, but in another sense, it is the same flame. It burns the same kind of oil, it emits the same kind of light, and it serves the same purpose."

I feel, O Lord, that thou proclaimest a great doctrine, but I cannot grasp it. Forbear with me!

.....

“Very well,” said the Buddha, “and would you call those flames the same that have burned yesterday and are burning now in the same lamp, filled with the same kind of oil, illuminating the “same room?”

“They may have been extinguished during the day,” suggested Kutadanta.

Said the Blessed One: “Suppose the flame of the first watch had been extinguished during the second watch would you call it the same if it burns again in the third watch?”

Replied Kutadanta: “In one sense it is a different flame, in another it is not.”

The Tathagata asked again: “Has the time that elapsed during the extinction of the flame anything to do with its identity or non-identity?”

“No, sir,” said the Brahman, “it has not. There is a difference and an identity, whether many years elapsed or only one second, and also whether the lamp has been extinguished in the meantime or not.”

“Well, then, we agree that the flame of to-day is in a certain sense the same as the flame of yesterday, and in another sense, it is different at every moment. Moreover, the flames of the same kind, illuminating with equal power the same kind of rooms, are in a certain sense the same.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Kutadanta.

The Blessed One continued: “Now, suppose there is a man who feels like thyself, thinks like thyself, and acts like thyself, is he not the same man as thou?”

“No, sir,” interrupted Kutadanta.

Said the Buddha: “Dost thou deny that the same logic holds good for thyself that holds good for the things of the world?”

Kutadanta bethought himself and rejoined slowly: “No, I do not. The same logic holds good universally; but there is a peculiarity about myself which renders it altogether different from everything else and also from other selves. There may be

another man who feels exactly like me, thinks like me, and acts like me; suppose even he had the same name and the same kind of possessions, he would not be myself.”

“True, Kutadanta,” answered Buddha, “he would not be thyself. Now, tell me, is the person who goes to school one, and that same person when he has finished his schooling another? Is it one who commits a crime, another who is punished by having his hands and feet cut off?”

“They are the same,” was the reply.

“Then sameness is constituted by continuity only?” asked the Tathagata.

“Not only by continuity,” said Kutadanta, “but also and mainly by identity of character.”

“Very well,” concluded the Buddha, “then thou agreeest that persons can be the same, in the same sense as two flames of the same kind are called the same; and thou must recognize that in this sense another man of the same character and product of the same karma is the same as thou.”

“Well, I do,” said the Brahman.

The Buddha continued: “And in this same sense alone art thou the same to-day as yesterday. Thy nature is not constituted by the matter of which thy body consists, but by thy sankharas, the forms of the body, of sensations, of thoughts. Thy person is the combination of the sankharas. Wherever they are, thou art. Whithersoever they go, thou goest. Thus thou wilt recognize in a certain sense an identity of thy self, and in another sense a difference. But he who does not recognize the identity should deny all identity, and should say that the questioner is no longer the same person as he who a minute after receives the answer. Now consider the continuation of thy personality, which is preserved in thy karma. Dost thou call it death and annihilation, or life and continued life?”

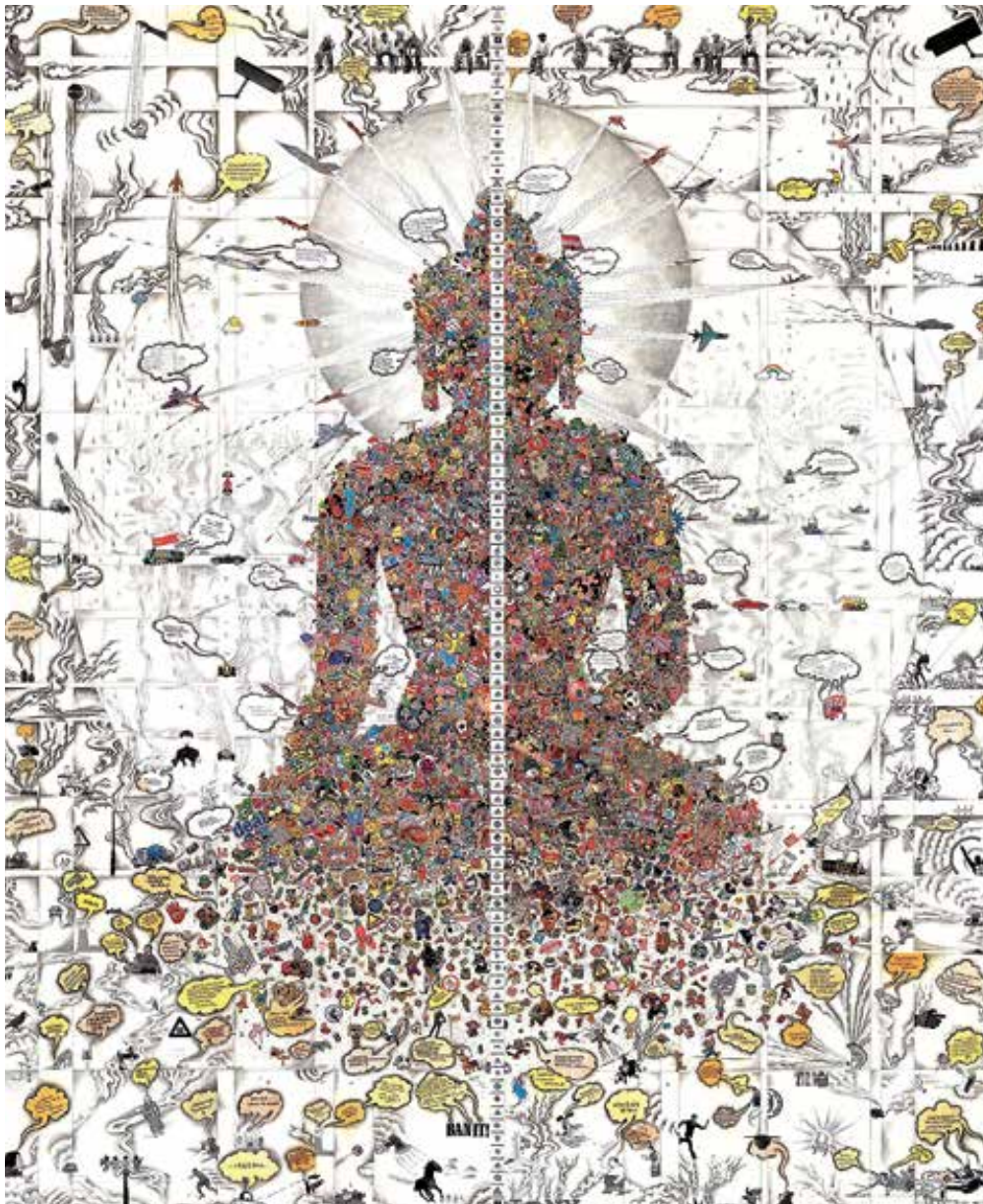
“I call it life and continued life,” rejoined



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'Thy nature is not constituted by the matter of which thy body consists, but by thy sankharas, the forms of the body, of sensations, of thoughts. Wherever they are, thou art.'

.....



© Gonkar Gyatso, Dissected Buddha (Boeddha ontleed), 2013

Is all
teaching
in vain?

.....

Kutadanta, “for it is the continuation of my existence, but I do not care for that kind of continuation. All I care for is the continuation of self in the other sense, which makes of every man, whether identical with me or not, an altogether different person.”

“Very well,” said Buddha. “This is what thou desirest and this is the cleaving to self. This is thy error. All compound things are transitory: they grow and they decay. All compound things are subject to pain: they will be separated from what they love and be joined to what they abhor. All

compound things lack a self, an atman, an ego."

"How is that?" asked Kutadanta.

"Where is thy self?" asked the Buddha.

And when Kutadanta made no reply, he continued: "Thy self to which thou cleavest is in constant change. Years ago, thou wast a small babe; then, thou wast a boy; then a youth, and now, thou art a man. Is there any identity of the babe and the man? There is an identity in a certain sense only. Indeed, there is more identity between the flames of the first and the third watch, even though the lamp might have been extinguished during the second watch. Now which is thy true self, that of yesterday, that of to-day, or that of to-morrow, for the preservation of which thou clamorest?"

Kutadanta was bewildered. "Lord of the world," he said, "I see my error, but I am still confused."

The Tathagata continued: "It is by a process of evolution that sankharas come to be. There is no sankhara which has sprung into being without a gradual becoming. Thy sankharas are the product of thy deeds in former existences. The combination of thy sankharas is thy self. Wheresoever they are impressed thither thy self migrates. In thy sankharas thou wilt continue to live and thou wilt reap in future existences the harvest sown now and in the past."

"Verily, O Lord," rejoined Kutadanta, "this is not a fair retribution. I cannot recognize the justice that others after me will reap what I am sowing now."

The Blessed One waited a moment and then replied: "Is all teaching in vain? Dost thou not understand that those others are thou thyself? Thou thyself wilt reap what thou sowest, not others.

Think of a man who is ill-bred and destitute, suffering from the wretchedness of his condition; As a boy, he was slothful

and indolent, and when he grew up he had not learned a craft to earn a living. Wouldst thou say his misery is not the product of his own action, because the adult is no longer the same person as was the boy?

Verily, I say unto thee: Not in. the heavens, not in the midst of the sea, not if thou hidest thyself away in the clefts of the mountains, wilt thou find a place where thou canst escape the fruit of thine evil actions.

At the same time, thou art sure to receive the blessings of thy good actions.

The man who has long been traveling and who returns home in safety, the welcome of kinsfolk, friends, and acquaintances awaits. So, the fruits of his good works bid him welcome who has walked in the path of righteousness, when he passes over from the present life into the hereafter."

Kutadanta said: "I have faith in the glory and excellency of thy doctrines. My eye cannot as yet endure the light; but I now understand that there is no self, and the truth dawns upon me. Sacrifices cannot save, and invocations are idle talk. But how shall I find the path to life everlasting? I know all the Vedas by heart and have not found the truth."

Said the Buddha: "Learning is a good thing but it availeth you not here. True wisdom can be acquired by practice only. Practice the truth that thy brother is the same as thee. Walk in the noble path of righteousness and thou wilt understand that while there is death in self, there is immortality in truth."

Said Kutadanta: "Let me take my refuge in the Blessed One, in the Dharma, and in the brotherhood. Accept me as thy disciple and let me partake of the bliss of immortality." ★

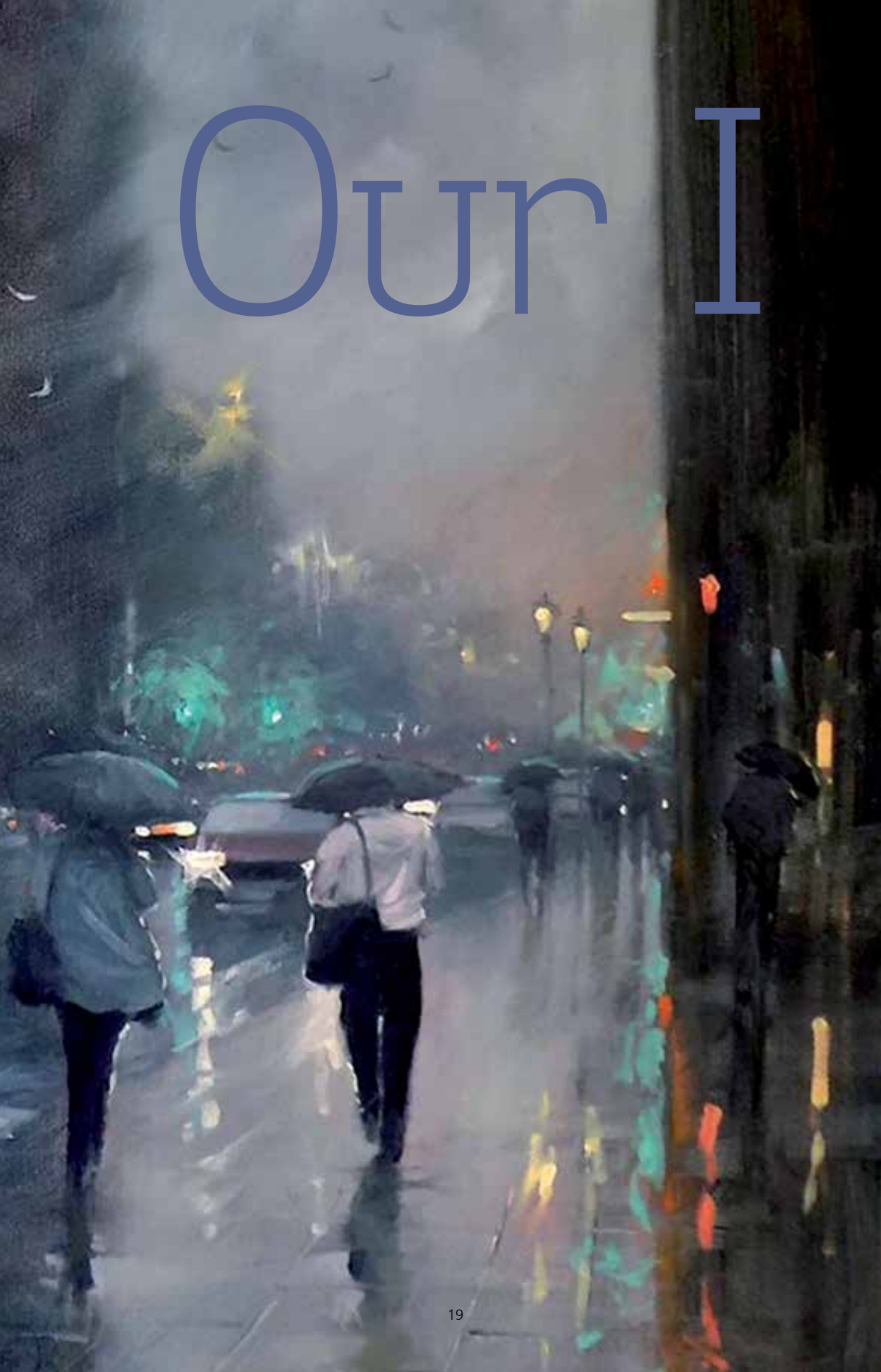
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DE GIDS



Our I



© Mike Barr. Late Rain, Waymouth Street

The summer edition of *De Gids*, (The Guide) a Dutch literary magazine, was dedicated to the theme 'The I'. The following contribution by Rebekka de Wit struck us because of the subtle clarity with which she elaborated on this theme. We derive from it that, in a social context, there is an increasing attention and perception for the confusion and problems, caused by the I.

'How do you tell a shattered story?'

'By slowly becoming everyone.'

'No. By slowly becoming everything.'

From: The ministry of Utmost Happiness by Arundhati Roy

Some time ago someone spoke to me about our 'individualised society'. Except, he himself did not put that in inverted comma's. And not only did he not use inverted comma's, he spoke about it with a certainty as if he was explaining the way to the station to me. ('So, if you go straight on from the seventies, and follow the whole process of secularisation, you will naturally end up in the individualised society.') It was just like a situation that I often experience at the baker's, in which he says: 'Have a lovely weekend' and I call back to him: 'You're welcome!'. The baker never even looks up. Such a conversation is a protocol in which you understand each other by the tone of voice. A kind of song.

It worried me. As if that conversation on individualism was also some kind of protocol, a conduct agreement with fixed texts and choruses, turning the individualised society into something as superficial as the baker's superficial wish for a lovely weekend. The words, I mean, because the truth would probably make me explode; except that it rarely comes to eruption.

The fact that the conversations that I had on individualisation had become a sub-

stantive protocol, became clear whenever I said things that clearly did not belong to it. Things that even evoked resistance. And although it initially felt quite heavy in my stomach, I now sense that this resistance is a kind of seismograph, which, much more precisely than I can express it, uncovers the things we hang on to. And to what extent we cling to it. And also, what this 'hanging on to' implies. This essay is an attempt to understand some of this resistance and reveal relevant complications, signs of untidiness and misunderstandings around the I in life and on paper.

That resistance was not the intention (when would that ever be the intention?). It was the unexpected result of a way of thinking about 'the I' that I stumbled on via other people some years ago. This way of thinking is based on the idea that perhaps, just perhaps, there is nothing on the inside, no compass, no voice, no truth we have to dig our way to if we wish to do the right thing. This way of thinking doubts the idea that the key is to find yourself, after which you would be able to make clear choices. Or that there is something like being 'true to yourself'. This way of thinking about the I has, for the time being, only brought me loneliness, a consequence to which I do not know to what persistent individuals would respond.

For instance, recently, when someone said to me that she was 'really someone who likes to eat egg cakes', and I asked her what they, the egg cakes, had to do

with her I. I do not remember exactly what I said after that. That I understood that she liked to eat egg cakes, but that, for me, went a bit too far if she considered that as part of herself and that, in any case, I had doubts on the question as to whether she was somebody at all. I can hear how it sounded: with those words, I suggested that I did not find her successful, but I meant that we should not assume that we were somebody before we came to this party. That this somebody she was talking about might well be the result of our conversation, instead of what preceded it. Or at least as well as. She did not understand it. I did not either actually, but the conversation with her seemed to me a good occasion to start something. Together. Was I perhaps a communist, she asked. I believe that that was her way to say that she found me militant. I said nothing, because it was not really a question, and in the silence I wondered if I was drifting off and when that might have started. Three years ago, I know, in the cellars of the Vrije Univer-

siteit (Free University), during a lecture by Antjie Krog. I remember a sense of excitement. An everyone-should-hear-this sort of excitement.

In a very meandering manner, Krog explained how she had always cherished her individuality, always considered it to be the answer to all kinds of problems ('Ayn Rand was my daily diet'). When she was a reporter and a witness to the sessions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, where for three years she saw people being confronted with each other, being forgiven, she realised that her 'whiteness' had little to do with her skin, but lay in a way of thinking about the I. And she told us that she started asking herself questions, such as: 'What good did this I bring to this country? How precious is this I, that it should survive, that it should be maintained, that you should create a future for this I? That I didn't deliver Mandela or Tutu. It didn't deliver the peaceful transition. It was a we that made this possible.' She called for the development of a way of thinking and acting that would leave the dichotomy of the I and the other behind.

'I should like to see that the I be totally divided. That it will be more like rain,' she said.

'But how then?!' the public desperately asked afterwards.

'I am completely educated in western dualism,' she said. 'I am muddling.' At the time, I visualised a white person, without a sense of rhythm and then wondered if rhythm might be a collective heartbeat and the lack of sense of rhythm would in that case mean that you cannot feel that heartbeat.

I wanted to muddle in harmony with her and persuade others to do so too, which has not been so successful up to now. Once in a while I ask a question that

makes it seem that I want to take something away from the other. Egg cakes, for instance.

Furthermore, I have tried to register all the things that people (including myself) say about their I, but it is impossible to keep up with that because we do not cease to say things about it. Virtually everything that we do, we take back to ourselves. And it is the other way around also: everything that we do not want to do, we can refer to as: that is just (not) who I am.

The last time that someone said that to me, I answered that I had heard that 'the Chinese, or rather, not the Chinese, but in the old China of the past, people assumed that there was no such thing as an I, deep inside us. There were other philosophers who had indeed presumed there was, however, and then they had a kind of meeting after which they had decided that it was more practical to assume that it was not the case. You do develop little things in your lifetime, habits and stuff like that, ways of reacting, but the last thing that you want is to embrace those as your character. The last thing you want to do is to follow a course by which you subsequently accept such a character.' It became so quiet after this, that it felt like I had turned the music off.

'I read this in a book,' I added. It seemed to me a good way to not be communitistic, but nevertheless they refused to accept the possibility that there was nothing inside. At least not like pearls are inside oysters. The refusal to put question marks behind the existence of this deep-I-inside, looks a lot like the refusal of my cousin, when asked to question the existence of God. A refusal that is generally considered to be very narrow-minded and saddening.

But I think that the comparison works.

That is to say: I passionately agree with David Foster Wallace when in his booklet: 'This is water' he says that there is no such thing as not worshipping. Wallace subsequently suggests that it may be safer to worship God, rather than money or power or yourself, because you will never have enough of what you worship. Perhaps worshipping is also subject to the first law of thermodynamics, which says that energy cannot be lost. It can only be relocated, like we relocate into worms when we die.

In the case of the I, the worshipping and all that we consider to be holy, have relocated from something outside us to something deep within ourselves that we defend with all our imagination, with all our language and grammar. Somehow, I find it hard to believe that we made our I holy, but that may be caused by my inadequate imagination regarding that word. The opposite is true too, in any case: the extent of factuality that we show in our tone of voice when we are speaking about our deep I, is the same extent of factuality that some people apply when they speak about God. And I do not know how much time it usually takes for holiness to relocate, but in 1894 a journal in London published an article with the title 'What is the new hedonism?' Apparently, a journalist detected a new kind of attitude to life that he wanted to pin-point. I imagine that that is where it probably started. Around 1894. And perhaps in a hundred years someone will write an article in which he describes this period as one in which self-sacrifice was considered a form of sacrilege, with therapy as a punishment. And not only the deep self has a degree of holiness, but also the assignment to develop the self is a religious assignment. We believe – we trust – that the preservation and cultivation of our I will make the world survive. That

we keep up the sky by concentrating on ourselves.

The amount of conversations that I have with people about 'their own borders', suggests that the I is a sovereign kingdom, the borders of which may not be crossed. Like God used to be an abstraction, to which we had to answer to prevent hell from breaking loose, this is now the case with our I.

And that abstraction that we must answer to, deep within ourselves, makes sure that we constantly say things like 'I am really someone who eats egg cakes'. I mean that that way of speaking is the result of the longing for an I and it reveals the obligation to have an I, instead of providing proof for it.

And then to think we only stand at the beginning of the untidiness in that field. A field that is much bigger than 'I'.

The untidiness lies in a number of things, for instance in a columnist in the Trouw newspaper, saying goodbye to his column and flattering himself because he had never used the word 'I'. That he was at least not as narcissistic as the younger generation that thinks that every time they fart it is worth discussing.

To me it was a confusing message, because the fact that he wanted to be decorated for not using 'I' in his columns seemed to contain so much I, that, in one small column, he wiped out all the trouble he took. Moreover, he did not seem to be aware of the fact that one does not detect narcissism by counting the word 'I' in texts. In that case Rens Kroes and Marcel Proust should be sharing a penalty box. They both write in the I-form, they are both fascinated by the effect of cakes, and they both expose their inner world. 'When I was twenty years old, I was not comfortable with myself. I felt a certain heaviness and I was living for others.

I did not assume responsibility for my

own life, because I was not sure how to do so. I was too dependent on others in my immediate surroundings. I may have looked super happy on the outside, but inside I was not. So... I stepped out of my comfort zone.'

'As soon as I observed an object outside myself, the consciousness with which I saw it put itself between the thing and me, and surrounded it with a spiritual halo that prevented me from directly touching the material. It 'evaporated', as it were, before I came into contact with it – like a heated body, which is touched by something wet, never touches the humidity itself because there is always an evaporation zone in between.'

Kroes and Proust are only lumped together here, to make it clear that the criteria that people use for assumingly detecting narcissism in texts, are rather useless, although columnists may find it interesting to know that Kroes uses the word I eleven times here and Proust three times.

I think that Proust exposed his inner world against the tide of his period and that he asked himself, many books long, the question whether there is something like a deep I, almost as a resistance, while Kroes considers this I as a fact. Without the efforts of the Coca Cola marketeers, Freud and Proust, Kroes

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.....



Rain in an old city. © Li Chen, China. With this photo she won the first prize of Open Photography, 2014

would probably never have considered to have a look at her inner world and subsequently add a megaphone there.

Besides, the inner world of the author Kroes is a rather exact depiction of the outer world. The fact that I experience that as remarkable, may have something to do with the image that those two words evoke. An inner world suggests a waterproof home, where you can hear the rain tapping on the windows. I just do not think that we are waterproof. At least not as waterproof as the expression 'inner world' suggests.

I am not sure what to do with it. With all those untidinesses, I mean.

The columnist of Trouw, flattering himself because the word 'I' is not to be found in his texts, perhaps my thinking of the statements of Rens Kroes, leads me subsequently to feel affected by his accusations against the younger generation, but at the same time I want to resist authors who start their sentences with 'the world is...' Or maybe not totally resist those authors, but the listeners who confuse 'the world' or other worlds of planetary dimensions with substance and confuse 'I' with narcissism. Why could not 'I' be a form of (perhaps justified) humility or (perhaps urgently required) doubt? Or even just a possibility?

And why, inversely, would not a statement in which someone thinks to describe the world by saying 'the world is a place where...' be considered a wrongful attempt to seize power?

On December 23 2016, the author Grunberg writes, in his 'footnote column' with the title 'Competition': 'The history of mankind illustrates the extent to which competition is a basic need.' This is supposed to say something about the world, whereas instead, to me, it mainly says something about the power that Grunberg wishes to have as a human



being and a writer, the power to put labels with qualities and categories on the whole of mankind, with all the associated alibi's.

I think that the history of mankind is illustrated by people who dared to use this kind of wording. Elimination of the (word) I in texts like the Trouw columnist proposes to make the world less narcissistic, imagining the above-mentioned sentences to go with it, seem like a very bad idea to me.

Seizures of power, whether in the world or in literature, are symptoms of narcissism, in an advanced stage even, making it very hard to recognise it as such. Furthermore, sentences that begin with 'the history of mankind...' are detrimental to a possible imagination of this mankind, which, to me, does not seem to be an improvement.

This may look like a contradiction: a statement of support to the I-on-paper that results from an exposé on a possible redefinition of the I-deep-inside. A redefinition that tends to abolish it.

The way in which we talk about our-

Deep inside
there is mainly
blood, that
is much older
than you

.....

selves works with comparisons and metaphors. Deep inside there is mainly blood, that is much older than you and I, and knows far better where to go than we do. So, it is a matter of imagination and I think that the I-form is a very good way to challenge this imagination, or experiment with it.

Moreover, the search for redefinition of the I is a political quest. Not merely a therapeutic one. The way in which we imagine the I as something that is situated deep inside, is a result of our geopolitical history and the thought that if we give enough space to the individual everything will be all-right in the end is, in turn, cause for many political choices. Political choices about the space that we are prepared to give up. The search for a redefinition is particularly a search for the expansion of the imagination around the I; an imagination that is political. If Antjie Krog asks the question 'what is it about this I that we need to create a future for it', it is a political question. Because I think that the assignment for self-preservation does not precede the decision if you will open the borders of your kingdom. But it seems to me that the decision not to do so, will only strengthen these borders even further. Yet I believe that there is an I that we share. And that we take anywhere we go, even to our private quarters, to the toilet and in bed. Our I, to be found somewhere in the (thinking) space in between us, that is always there. The I we try to answer to, that we presume we have to make the best version of.

In the latest book by Arundhati Roy there is the sentence: 'I am a gathering'. That seemed to me a good way to consider the I - a gathering. And I believe that it takes courage to add something to that gathering. And that this addition shall have to start with an image.



Instead of calling our body a temple in which we live, we should call it a leaky tent, letting through all the water that falls from the air. All the rain that falls, falls through us and will come out again at a certain moment. It must needs be true. We are, in fact, that leaky. For instance, at the moment that Krog said during the lecture that the theology of Tutu is that God too, is 'interconnected', making that 'God exposes to change' after that I felt something wet in the corner of my right eye. (It was not crying.)

I imagined God as a naked man in the rain, because, in Tutu's theology, he is living in a leaky tent as well and I realised that I never thought about the possibility that God may depend on us, instead of we on him. And that this may apply to everything. That I depend on we. That is where the wetness came from. (It was not yet rain.) ★

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Procrastination

We sometimes say that if love comes from one side only, it cannot be sustainable. Love is a dance, a constant exchange of strength and intensity. Novalis, Claude van de Berge and David White, all work towards the same conclusion.



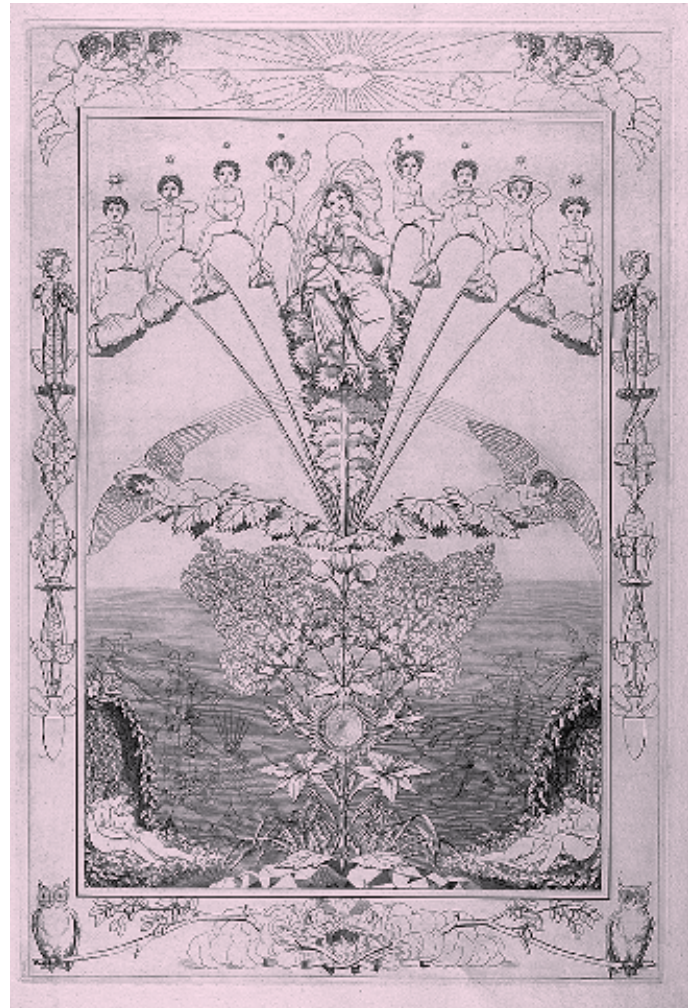
In Novalis' book 'De Blauwe Bloem' (The Blue Flower) we read: 'It seems to me that a historian author also needs to be a poet, because it is possibly only poets that master the art of connecting events properly.'

And a bit further:

"For that reason, I have always loved poets. Through them, life and the world have become clearer and easier to understand for me. I felt that they were friends with the sharp spirits of the light, who penetrate and discern every nature, and clothe it with their own softly coloured veil. I felt how my own nature could easily unfold in their songs, and it was as if it could then move more freely, and enjoy its easy naturalness and longing - that it could spread its wings, and evoke an innumerable number of charming activities."

With striking, poetic brush strokes, Novalis shows us the world

Philipp Otto Runge, Die Zeiten. Vier Kupferstichvorlagen, The times of the day, four copper engravings, 1803. Photographed during the exhibition Alles in allem. Die Gedankenwelt des mystischen Philosophen Jacob Böhme in Das Residenzschloss, Dresden, 2017



Poetry is power, soul power and vitality

through the eyes, the heart, and the soul of the poet. Who would not like to possess such rich powers? So that every word would tremble with joy, and “may invoke a thousand charming effects.” Then everything becomes a creative act, which fulfils the world, enriches life, and restores it.

Then it would be possible to recognise what the Belgian poet Claude van den Berge describes in his ‘anaphoric essay’ in which he gives thirteen definitions of poetry.

The first definition is immediately a warning:

‘Poetry is no decoration or entertainment, no sentiment or softness, but power, soul power and vitality’.

And the two final definitions: ‘Poetry is the sanctification of language’ and ‘Poetry is resounding silence’.

To make language flow in this way, to let words sing, so that it becomes the power that sustains life, so that it obtains its wholesome, healing effect, so that it leads the silence towards activity. To be creative in this way ...

Likewise, the Word flows, the Word that “was in the beginning,” the Word that is with God, the word that is God. It is the one, all-generating power, that leads everything and everyone back to its origin.

... at least as a possibility.

This requires: awareness – a consciousness that desires to be creatively active, in the service of Gnosis and humanity ...as the only possibility.

Someone once asked me: “What do you most like to do?” And he added: “If you know this, then you know it for sure, even for others ...”

I did not know. Such a simple question and I had no idea. It was a crucial question. A question that I carried around in my inner being for more than a year.

Rilke says in his poem “Wass mich bewegt”: (What moves me): One has to be patient with the unresolved issues of the heart and try to love the questions themselves, as closed rooms, and as books written in a strange foreign language

It comes down to live everything. If you live the questions, you may slowly but surely without noticing live into the answer - one good day.

Maybe I needed to carry this question with me, within me. But the question remained unanswered. In the meantime, I found encouragement in an essay by the English poet-philosopher David Whyte, entitled ‘Procrastination’, which is, in slightly crooked Dutch: ‘delaying action’. The poet comforts us, by showing that what seems to be laziness, indecisiveness and lack of involvement, is in reality a ‘ripening’. Instead of expounding, defining, explaining to one’s self and one’s surroundings and therefore externalizing, procrastination can lead to a slow, inner revelation of a pattern. A genuine pattern that was already present within us.

Perhaps the answer to the one question: ‘what would you prefer to do’, was also a waiting, a long time-serving for clarity.

That which every person ultimately loves is ... loving. Simply, to love.

And how wonderful, at the same time the most important commandment in your life is also the highest octave of this thought: "Love God above all".

Which god?

The human god? Who embraces us again and again? Comforting, patiently waiting, stimulating?

The intellectual God? Who makes us understand, gives insight?

The soul-god? Who lets us experience that everything is one? Who impels towards unity.

Or the Divine spirit which, full of love, leads us back to the house of the Father?

Yes, loving in this way, to embrace everything, with all your heart, all of your soul, with your whole devotion and your complete faith, all your intelligence, all your abilities, yes, even with your ego.

In an ode of the Pistis Sophia we read:

"I confess the Lord, and his entities are with Him. I trust in Him; He loves me.

I would not have known how to love God if He had not loved me.

Who is able to know what Love is? Only the one who is loved in truthfulness. "

"Love God above all."

We can do this because we are loved by God. We sometimes say that if love has to come from one side only, nothing and no one will eventually be able to keep it up. If love comes from one side only, it cannot be sustainable. Love is a dance, a constant exchange of strength and intensity. To love and be loved. And do not look for the God that you love outside of yourself.

God shows himself in us as light in our mind, as a sweet heat in our heart, and as strength in our will. Seek the living God within you, and be thankful.

Master Beinsa Douno teaches us about love:

'Human love changes and varies,
spiritual love varies but does not change,
Divine love does not change, does not vary,
it simply grows. "

Human love can thus grow into divine love.

In his primal language, gleaned from the reality of life, he says,

'Pure human love leads to suffering,

suffering gives experience,

experience generates knowledge

knowledge brings Wisdom,

Wisdom leads to Truth.

God is Love.

Love, Wisdom and Truth.

Christ makes God tangible.

Christ is divine love, divine wisdom, divine truth, which can be lived and applied by all men and women.

There is no surer and straighter path than along these three principles.

Love brings Life,

Wisdom brings Light,

Truth brings Freedom". ☼

Whoever wants to see the truth, cannot rely on his senses alone. The World Soul requires the vigilance of all human faculties: the reason, the mind, the perception, the thinking, the experience and the feeling.

The senses are rather the concealers of the Truth. We must first find the truth within ourselves, before we can perceive it in the outer world.

The School of the Rosycross is based on the universal teachings of all times. In this it follows the example of all Gnostic movements.

Each of these held the *Traditio* - the pure preservation and passing on of the one doctrine of liberation - in high honour. At the same time, the school is particularly alert as to what comes forward in this century in the field of the world, because it is precisely in the current situation that the links with society can be made.

In this interaction, the school develops its own voice, its own view and its own elaboration on the one universal doctrine; the school expresses its own truth, obtained through sacrifice, love, aspiration and human service. Therefore, this has allowed the core of its work to become so radiant that it could merge with the core of the universal brotherhood. That is the secret of the universal chain. And the one that comes with open heart and head in the temples of the spiritual school experiences the radiance of that bright core.

In addition to the pure teachings of the Tao, the works of Hermes and the legacy of the previous Brotherhood of the Cathars, the school brings its members into contact with thinkers such as Boehme, Eckartshausen, Naimy, Meyrink and Gadal. They can be regarded as the pillars on which the modern Rosycross continues to build.

Antonin Gadal (1877-1962) possessed great knowledge of Gnostic history and tried to turn Gnosis into a living factor in society throughout his life. Many of his studies were based on world literature and original sources from the Middle Ages. Another predecessor, the Rosicrucian Society in the years before the Second World War starting from Max Heindel's Rosicrucian Fellowship, always had an open eye for the liberating aspects of literature, art and music (opera), in fact for everything that could elevate the human soul. And further back in time, in the classical Rosicrucians, we see the same picture: what they were looking for is an ancient knowledge that has been preserved or has been re-vivified. They frankly confessed:



The restoration of order



© Sharon Lawless, "Cre (October), Mixed media collage on museum board, 2017

“Our philosophy is nothing new. It is the same one that Adam received after his fall and which also applied to Moses and Solomon. Since the truth is unique and concise and always remains equal to itself [...] we cannot say “This is true for the philosophy, but false for the theology.” For what touched Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras and others - flows together and forms a sphere or ball, whose parts are all equally far removed from the centre.”

It is this philosophy that we examine. We search for the depth, the silence, the peace and the movement, in macrocosm and microcosm.

But not in texts alone. Especially in Truth, in the mind. And just like our predecessors, we also know how we stand on the shoulders of the giants. Even the great wise men have always said that they know nothing of themselves, but everything through the Tradition.

In that Tradition, the respect and the reverence for the Light resonates; just as we also acknowledge full of gratitude the direct bond with the Light, once obtained by the merging of both nuclei. In the temples, the energies and inspiration of the brotherhood of the other nature circulate daily - and we can experience it. Would we forget that very simple universal line, then there is the danger that we shall come to float in a vacuum.

The Light connects us incessantly with the one source - the World Soul - and through it with the Father of lights. And all who testify from it teach us that the father “in the form of the cross extended the world-soul over the body of the cosmos”. The image of the cross therefore is handed down to us not so much from the terrible martyr history of a man called Jesus, but from Plato, who explains to us:

“Harmoniously, in perfect proportions, the Father has mixed the elements, the elements that arose when he poured himself out, sacrificed his exalted existence. *Thereby arose the body of the world.*

And in the form of the cross He has stretched out the World Soul over this body. She is the divine one in the world. She has taken on death on the cross so that the world might exist.”

That is why Plato also calls the world: the grave of the divine. But not a grave in which something lies dead, but in which there is something eternal, and for that eternal element dying is the opportunity to prove the omnipotence of life. What a powerful symbolism we meet here. For the small world - the human being as a *minutus mundi* or microcosm - also shows in its personality the form of the cross, and also there lies the soul stretched in the form of a cross, waiting until its forces receive the chance to express themselves consciously.

How universal, therefore, is the image of the grave temple of Christian Rosycross. Because there also, nothing is dead but in it we find the World Soul itself. The World Soul in this Temple is found by completely alert, active, researching, wondering and desiring brothers, who use all the energy of their existence. And then they find the door ... and there they find the opportunity ‘to prove the omnipotence of life’.

Hence the constant recommendation: Take your life seriously. It is a gift, a possibility, do not forget to dig it up, now, now that you have the chance. You do that by participating in life in such a way that you make a difference in a positive way. Everything a person does, especially when he is conscious of the soul, is important, has an influence, has an impact. Do not be indifferent, so that you will not come to the same conclusion as

‘Devote yourself to the demand of this century’

.....

the writer Maria Stahlie said some time ago about herself: 'All those things that I have always seen as positive qualities - such as restraint, self-reliance - have led to a form of cowardly reticence. Instead of intervening where it could have made a difference in a bad situation, [...] I often retired into my own safe shell.' That is why our brotherhood says: "Devote yourself to the demand of this century."

In the 'Confessio' we read:

"Do you not think that you - after examining your talents, after considering the insights you have in the holy scripture, and after considering how imperfect and contradictory all the arts are - now finally, together with us, should start thinking about their healing? That you must offer your hands to **God**, who does the work, and that you dedicate yourself to the need in this age?"

In fact, in this text we may read: the personality (= all arts) is imperfect. Healing is necessary. Let **God** do the work by your action, while you commit yourself to what is needed in your time, in your environment.

But back to our subject immersing ourselves in the universal tradition, in the depth of the World Soul, and to exploring the difference between the soul and the personality. The Pythagoreans said that it is the senses that make man perceive the sensory things. But it is not the senses that can show us the World Soul. The senses are, in some respects at this stage, its *concealers*. They cannot show us the harmonic order from which things originate. That is only possible for the soul. It is the soul that orders, creates, re-creates and purifies.

You must first find this harmonious order within yourself if you want to be able to perceive that World Soul in the outer world. You can do that when you

know how to purify your reason. If the mind is open and unconditioned the soul will cooperate and act in unison. The deeper meaning of the world, that which prevails therefore as eternal, its legitimate necessity, will then unfold in and through the soul. In the soul lies the necessity and the purpose of your life.

You will never find the deeper meaning of your own life in the outer world. Understanding the necessity of all things, the answer to the question as to 'why they are as they are?' is: it is on a different plane - in the field of the soul. The sages say: "In the soul the meaning of the universe is revealed." The paradox is that we cannot see that until there is a vibrant soul in us.

The material plane reveals what the soul has been able to do for others.

It is special in that many people presently do so much for others.

That is the beginning of the soul-activity and it is innate for man as a species. Please do not believe the misconception, the misinterpretation of Darwin's teachings, that man would live only out of self-preservation. This is not even the case with the animals. Biologists like Frans de Waal said frankly: 'Altruism is not exclusive to humans. It is also present in dolphins, elephants and apes - in them also a 'moral' behaviour' is present. Animals do care about each other.'

The World Soul has sown so much good in man! Because man is like the earth. And life is like the wind, the rain, the storms, and the summer that rage across the earth. And while the violence rages over it, those seeds sprout. Above the earth, in the soul, the grain waves in the wind. That is why the Rosicrucian keeps his eye on the soul. He plows and tills his earth in sacrifice and service. As soon as love and sacrifice are present, there are the aspects of the soul. Because the personality is confined and has different qualities than the soul. The soul belongs to the infinite, is eternal and unbounded. A personality exists and disappears again. Hence, the Pythagoreans said that only fools can think that the personality is the 'soul'. Man is a composite being - whoever wakes up in a spiritual sense, discovers the Gnosis.

Egypt as a school of initiation

A particularly large and accurate knowledge of the composition of man was known to those initiates, the priests in ancient Egypt. For them, man was not only a body, a personality. That is but the outer jacket. Life force enters man from his **Ka**, a second body that is always with him. He receives insight, life and a wealth of images from his **Ba**, the soul bird who is with him during the day, in his thoughts, but stays elsewhere at night. In the heart - which they called the **Ach** - is the moral compass of the personality. As a sounding-lead, it indicates the straight lifeline, or the dark troubles of untrue motives. Yes, it is not without reason that Catharose de Petri said that Egypt was in fact one great initiation school and that is understandable. The country was initially so well governed and so pure that thousands and thousands of entities were liberated

L'âme du monde the World Soul

.....

there. Witness also Plato, who notes that their wisdom and law [...] 'from the very beginning investigated the natural order and were involved with prophecy and the healing arts, which after all bring health, and derives from these sublime elements, so necessary for human life ...'

The individual, the thinking person, that is: you and I, who are so closely connected with the body - has a role in this which can be compared with that of a station master, who knows how to manage all the timetables, so that all trains can proceed without impediments. He is the temporary signalman who arranges life in such a way that the bodily functions like eating and drinking, the life functions like movement and growth of the *ka*, the soul functions, like the feelings of beauty and sublimity, pro- and rejection, sympathy and antipathy of the *ba*, the life motives of the heart and thought – that they all proceed in a harmonious alteration, without forcing, without oppression.

To be liberated in the language of Egypt meant: to be allowed to farm the fields of happiness to live with Osiris forever. Osiris is the Spirit, the all-pervading World Soul, from which all originates. All of us are a spark of his Spirit, he is undividedly present in every human soul.

Ra is his name during the day, when he is the sun and the mighty energy behind the solar disk. At night he is Osiris, one and the same spirit, ruler and Light of the unknown half of the world. As the Spirit itself, Osiris is always one.

When the body was returned to the earth, the eternal essence in it entered the path to the original Eternity. What does that mean? As the Rosicrucian says, "In Jesu Morimur," "in Jesus we die," just as the initiated Egyptian said that he 'passed away in Osiris'. We pass away in the soul, whereby we live. In the same



In the true man, Osiris,
the eternal, already lives
as completely as possible
during this transitory life

.....

© Ghislain Bédard, L'âme du monde (The world soul). Indian ink on paper, 2011.

vein, for the initiated Egyptians it was a death that started while still living. In the true man, Osiris, the eternal, already lives as completely as possible during this transitory life.

If after the physical death, everything of the lower nature had been washed away in the southern pond in which the Gods wash themselves, in the transition from the night to the day, man himself became Osiris. This Osiris, this new, young revelation of the World Soul preserves within itself the image of the original Heart.

Osiris was also the constellation of Orion, a constellation of stars that can be seen in the sky during the entire night and that is part of the so-called fixed stars. There, among the gods, in the sky in which the stars reflect something of the Original Light of the eternal homeland, there is henceforth the abode of the heart that is considered light enough after it had passed the weighing test in which it had shown itself to be lighter than a feather. There the young soul-born Osiris continues his way of the stars. Do you recognize this universal language? Can you perceive how deep the source is, from which also the Spiritual School draws? Can you taste the sameness of language with the previous brotherhood, and their 'way of the stars' that the Parfait, the Pûr undertook? Perhaps you may see for yourself how Antonin Gadai described the same road in his booklet *On the Way to the Holy Grail*, with the three caves Mes-Naut, Kepler, Ka – or: formation, reformation, transformation? And how the living body in our century is a pure, accessible reflection of the World Soul?

Through all times there is only one Path and it always points the same way: Die and grow, grow and die. Formation-reformation-transformation. Ex-

traordinary, profound language, this language of the Mysteries! This language does not contrast ideas, no, it recovers and heals, and while it does so, it is simultaneously a balm, a consolation and an exhortation, without a word being spoken. For it speaks in a highly-tuned vibration, it shares in benevolence, it admonishes in a long-suffering diligence, and its speech is the language of Love. From this language, an unprecedented harmonious atmosphere emanates.

What is dying exactly, seen from the perspective that the gods, the spiritual world, have given to the human destiny? In fact, it is not different from restoring the original order. And with that it is an act of the greatest Love.

See again the image of the small world that we are. What once was conceived in the lines of art in harmony, beauty and coherence has been disturbed in today's complicated human life.

In the Mysteries, death is nothing else but the restoration of the original order. What dies, disappears, as it does in the external world. When you die, the temporality will return to what and how it was before you were here. Which is also a recurrence of the original situation.

If you understand the new language of the heart, and you enter the temple-grave of the microcosm, then all chaos, caused by wrong thinking, feeling and acting, will evaporate after which the original order is restored. Not you, or I are the ones who restore the order. We only offer "our hands to the **divinity**, who does the work, and we devote ourselves to the requirement of this age." That is the active, practical Gnosis. To die in this sense is a return to the inner peace, to a beneficent situation, in which the mind becomes silent, and a peace opens up that overcomes the contradictions. The inner space becomes clean and clear. And the mystery sphere of the rose garden blows through the court of the mind and the Gospel of Truth lights up for you - that last, most brilliant Lamp of Ancient Egypt, once ignited by the gnostic Valentinus: "That is why a being who has Knowledge is a being from on high.

When he is called, he listens, answers and turns to Him who calls him and goes up to Him, because he knows that he has been named.

[...]

His wisdom reflects on the Word,

His teaching expresses it,

His knowledge reveals it,

His tolerance crowns it,

His joy harmonizes it,

His glory elevates it,

His image is part of it,

His rest absorbs it,

His love embodies it,

His faithfulness embraces it.

Thus, the Word of the Father vibrates through the All, as the fruit of His heart, as an expression of His Will." ☸



Ruth-Alice Kosnick.
Wo kein Weg mehr ist,
ist des Wegs Beginn
(Where there is no
more way, is the begin-
ning of the way).

Youth

A human life clearly isn't a linear process with a departure and an arrival. Time after time something new came my way, something like an offer, a change of course, an insight. A fire that was stirred up again and again.

New books, new people. Also new jokes and comments about my doings, sometimes bitter, sometimes instructive, guiding. Friends stayed away, new ones came - and went. Until - just as unexpectedly - another door opened. Yet, a pattern began to emerge, something like a thread was perceived. Although not always the desired or expected. Often, I thought that a point had been reached in which a full stop marked the end, but repeatedly it turned out to be just a comma. Never really something accomplished, at best passed things by, maybe shifted my boundaries somewhat - if there were any.

The essence of the being we call the 'I' was always there, including everything that came along with it - and around it.

A kaleidoscope as it were, with now and then a battlefield, then again, a hell-hole or a flowing landscape with a blissful home-feeling.

Also, sometimes a frenzied flight to nowhere.

Come and go, journey and arrival. They are all references to a course, a lapse of time.

But when I 'look back' for a moment, somehow it is missing.

Childhood, youth, maturity, they are stages in a life story, but in my view not relevant in my life.

That whole past just seems to be contracted, concentrated in one point. Each a new tomorrow.

I can't name it. Maybe 'over' covers it?

But better, no name, for the 'today' is always new, unique, without a yesterday and a tomorrow.

A wink from eternity in which I can become aware of my entire being in a split second.

As a guest? As a spectator? ... or as myself? A vague trepidation dodges both the question and the answer. But something inside of me knows.

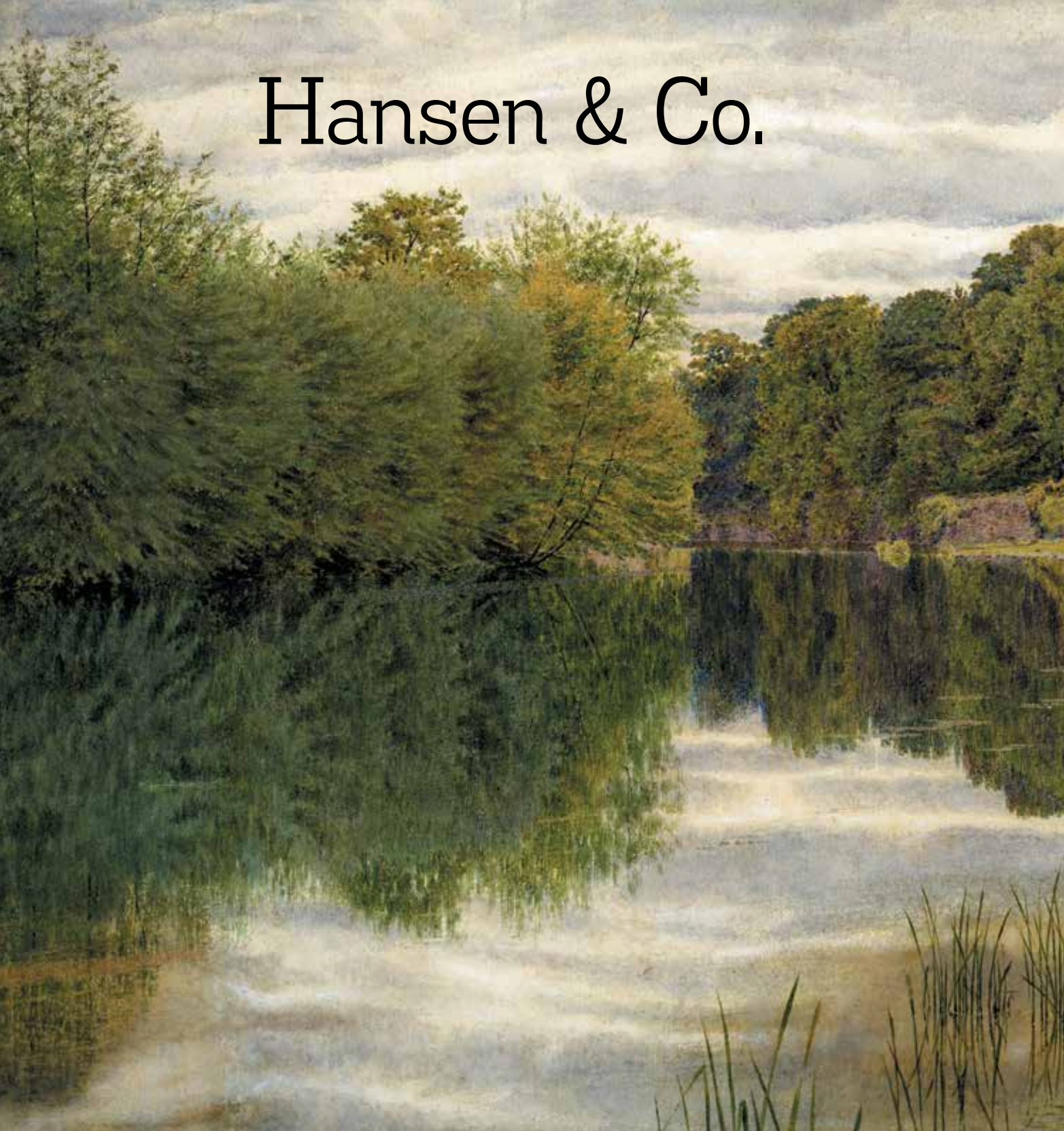
The core is always that flame, also entrusted to me, the oblivious carrier. With the loyal kaleidoscope as the look-out.

And contradicting all common sense, two unquestionable concepts pave my way until today: I-am-led and I-am-protected - and an almost chronic euphoria of gratitude. The climb to true maturity is an eternal youth. ★

Path of twilight
Poem by Manfred Hausmann

Soon it will be evening.
Silence behind the fences
and I am alone
on the snowy road,
which follows the slope
down into the lowland,
in a gentle curve.
Birch trees, stiffened by ice,
rough palisade, thorns,
alder twigs, a windswept fence
give shelter to the track
for a short time.
Then it only belongs to the infinity,
which weaves twilight
and vaguely, as it searches,
absorbs it into its darkness.
Hoarfrost crackles,
and snow creaks under my foot.
Road on which I go,
to you I belong!
Who longs for the light,
in darkness he must go!
What worsens misery,
just is the germ of salvation!
Where reason is no longer prevalent,
true sense arises.
Where there is no more way,
the path begins!

Hansen & Co.



George Price Boyce, View of the River Teme, Ludlow, Shropshire. Watercolor, British Museum, London, 1873.

J. ANKER LARSEN

MONOLOGICAL INTERIOR

The village teacher Hansen had definitely reached self-realisation just before his retirement, through all kinds of weal and woe experiences in his search for genuine life, and hence belonged to the 'placeless family of eternity experiencers'.

Now that he is an actual pensioner, he goes out on his bike one day and, just outside the village, makes himself comfortable by enjoying the summer sun, reclining in a dry ditch on tender grass and the clover. After a while, in a jolly mood, he begins to address himself in speech, while still also being the small 'turd' Hansen (as he calls himself), not being able to resist the urge to ponder on matters one absolutely can't ponder on, because they can only be experienced.

Fragment of the end of Anker Larsen's last novel 'Hansen', from 1949.

‘You see, Hansen, in fact it is not quite correct that there are no words with which to express the totality of existence. Agreed,

there is of course much truth in the famous: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,’ and indeed man cannot utter or understand this Word, but still we could come to a kind of representation of the Word and its origin.

Let us take the word ‘spring’ as an example; the winter has just gone and one day you stand outside in the open nature and you feel, you know, because you experience it with your entire being, something blissful, and the word forms within you, redemptively, from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet.

‘Spring!’, you say; there are no borders, neither within nor outside you; spring is everything and everywhere.

Then you go home, to your small farm – we assume for a moment that you have a small farm and practice agriculture – and you discover then that spring is twofold; you absorbed it with your entire being but at the same time it is something useful, that you must use.

Rain and sun alternate and the spring changes its meaning to ploughing and sowing and lots more. After all it means revenues, money and if you later put that in the bank, that blissful spring will have shrivelled into a couple of numbers on a piece of paper and if there is a large number on that paper you say: ‘This has been a good spring.’ That spring has thus entered the ‘they’-world, which, however, cannot exist without the ‘it’-world and will perish if it loses the link with ‘it’. And as it is with the spring, it is with life itself: one can only know it with one’s entire being and then it is eternal; but the word ‘life’ can also mean a

short stretch of years: namely the time between the birth and the death of a person and that is not much, as we, in our age, are well aware of. Perhaps what I am telling you here seems absurd and you might not find it very interesting, but I should really like you to understand a little bit of it with your small mind, which will never be able to comprehend the whole.

You might remember that, when I was outside on the southern field, when I was one with the will of the eternal Being for the first time, I saw an image that you could consider a reality at the same time, while realising that after all this was just an image, but one that came so close to reality as it can be understood by a human mind, to, all in all, reach eternity.

You may grumble and pretend that our mind is the highest and the best that we have and that it has brought us very far in the field of science, technology, and so forth, much further than any earlier civilisation, but I will answer: even when it is true that you are a turd, Hansen, and you can’t help it, but you shouldn’t be so darned proud of this as well!

The sensible ones, like you, search for a first cause, the beginning of all things and create a philosophy of life that presents an image of existence, that is to say: of the ‘they’-world, because without it there is nothing for you. But you know, Hansen, in essence there is no first cause, there has never been a beginning, existence simply is. But because this ‘self’ of ours – as it knows itself with its organs, its nerves, its lust and its turmoil plus everything it hears and sees – has somewhere begun and will end somewhere, yes, there must have been a first cause indeed.

Every ego,
from its
origin,
carries the
centre of life
within himself

.....

But pay attention and take as a means of assistance the image of the eternal central Sun that I saw there, in the southern field. That sun was an image of the eternal Being, that has not developed from an origin, nor does it decay; it is the centre where life radiates from. That is genuine life, Hansen, substantial, I would say. No abstract philosophical mist, no, substantial but not – not yet – what we call matter.

Every human being is also in his deepest self a child of that eternal Being, is in essence one of the beams of light that is radiated from it, independently totally himself, as well as at one with all the others in this evident love, which never demands, but only radiates.

Every ego, from its origin, carries the centre of life within himself and knows in principle that all the others have it too, that is how internally close the other one is. That secure feeling of having the centre of life in oneself, is the mother of all love, but... regrettably it can also turn into hate.

It is like this: when these 'light-beams' have reached a point so far away from their origin, they begin to feel a resistance from the absolute nothing that can never live; this resistance brings them to self-assertion, which they originally did not need; the I-feeling grows in them and becomes more and more powerful, but still they recognise their close relationship with all the others. However, that which I call substance, gets heavier as it approaches this corpse-cold nothing and then the first feeling of fear comes up, for now life is at stake.

Some who can still strongly feel the warmth of love also feel where they come from. They don't let themselves be lured away any further, they turn around in time and will never know death, but

all the others go further through heavier and heavier substances, all the way to the outside, into the material world - you understand, Hansen? And although that world has originated from the source of eternal Being, it is characterised by the influence of the corpse-cold nothing and this causes everything that is born or dies, that manifests itself and decays, to convert to the 'they'-world. The material, transient brains of the people have never known eternal Being, although without eternal Being, without 'It', the they-world would not exist.

Now, throughout the ages there have always been people who in some inexplicable way were capable of getting to know something about something eternal. These people think that they can feel the eternal within themselves; they have a more or less vague memory of their origin -it has not been totally washed away at birth; and remember, Hansen, that man is more than the body in which he is locked up for a while. Well then, these people see the true salvation in the indescribable that they feel inside themselves: they surrender to it and thereby are on their way to leave the power of the 'corpse-cold nothing' behind. They are the creatures that return to their origin and then they now know many things about life that they could not have known had they not been under the influence of the corpse-cold nothing. Others, who have much weaker memories of their origin in themselves, try to cling to that undefined feeling, because they think that their salvation is in it. They hear the words of those who remember more clearly and they sense that there is truth in their words. But their feeling is vague and fragile and they try to stimulate it with artificial means, with the establishment of religious communi-





In spite of all
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.....

ties and religions with rituals and fixed doctrines, which over time will become more important than the true sense of life. Thus, the religions slide into the 'they'-world more and more, and they start fighting each other and even persecute people of other faiths and kill them, thus serving the corpse-cold nothing, while pretending to serve eternal life. Another group sees the folly of this and they also recognise that the doctrines cannot be true, but they do not fathom that once the eternal life was behind them. Therefore, these people cling to the they-world, which they are 'sure' is there; the intellect becomes their god

and so they realise much by the force of it. Just like anyone, they actually want the good, the best possible happiness for all. In spite of all those efforts you can then observe that 'It' begins to retire from our earthly they-world. Do I say too much, Hansen? What kind of happiness is it then, that we earthly beings want to produce for the largest possible number of people? What does it help with regard to the happiness of people like us, that we can get more knowledge from some experts than our brains can contain? Thinking, 'enlightenment', has become the god of our humanity and we have been on our knees to her for so long that

we cannot get up anymore. As a consequence, maintaining the own 'I' has become so powerful, that it cannot stand any more resistance and so people kill each other relentlessly.

Yet many people still want the highest possible happiness for humanity. It sounds abstract, Hansen, but we must presume that it is meant well. That highest possible happiness will and must be reached by ideologies now, replacing religions and not needing individuals at all, except for serving the ideology and to kill those who dare to pursue different ideologies.

Yes, Hansen, God created man in his image, but we are on our way to turn this image into a tool, or rather we are already doing that. With the power of our so-called good sense we have come so far that we can almost destroy all life on this planet in an instant and don't even have the power anymore to say if we want this or not. And if we refrain from it, it will probably be more out of fear than out of love, so that means that the corpse-cold nothing has reached a complete victory. Then it is over with our culture, with our 'civilisation', as happened to so many earlier civilisations. This time it will probably be the end of the whole globe. Somewhere in the Old Testament there is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah that were going to be erased. A pious man, who remembered his origin and therefore loved his fellow human beings, prayed to Jahweh to spare the town. Jahweh promised this, if there were ten good people in the town, but there were not. Ten good people could have saved Sodom and Gomorrah. How many of such good people would be necessary to save planet earth? And on how many can we count to be there?

We don't know, Hansen, because that is

a question from the they-world and we never have understood that world very well.

We will die within due course, Hansen, and the they-world will neither miss nor remember us, because we definitely were no great men. But even if we had been, it would not have helped, because hatred has gained great power in our time; as it has done before. There once was a poor man who was so full of goodness, that he was hated for it and they tortured him to death at the cross. From the richness of his spirit this man said: 'Forgive them, they do not know what they are doing.' I don't know if they were forgiven, but I do know that we are much like them nowadays.

Anyway, Hansen, I cannot be but happy, whether I have to carry you around for another hundred years or – to your relief – die in five minutes. At least I believe that I can be happy, because I know the Love that does not desire anything, but radiates completely in giving, as the eternal Being itself, because I know this love as one of the many egos who know that each one of them has the centre of life in himself and who are aware of that, because they have experienced it in themselves as well as in others. These egos all know all of this and they will only know it better in eternity, because there is no bottom in the depth of 'it'.

Well, Hansen, now we set off again.

.....

And Hansen, the eternity experiencer, who is also Hansen the village teacher, jumps on his bike and follows the village road; he looks rejuvenated; a very lonely man, who yet – connected with everything alive – feels liberated. ★



Collective work, individual search

JIDDHU KRISHNAMURTI

The “I”, the ego, is impermanent, it is an illusion, it is a bundle of qualities, centre of virtues, sins, ideals, a circumference in which there is a beginning and an end. Now, that “I” is formed through the senses, through the emotions, through the perception, and from that perception arises thought, which creates consciousness and out of this is born the separate “I”-ness. The “I” does not exist by itself, the “I” is not something which feels by itself: you feel and the “I” is created; you think and the “I” is created; you have strong emotions and the “I” is created. It is not the “I” that feels and thinks; the “I” is but the coordination, the coming together of corporeal existence which forms the body of sensation, perception, thought, which becomes consciousness. That consciousness of the mind creates the “I”. Therefore, you say: “I want to exist, I have a separate existence.” Therefore, you say: “I feel, I think, I perceive, I am conscious.” If you are seeking Truth, then you have senses and yet the mind is not creating the “I” through those senses. You have feelings, but the mind is not creating the “I”; you must have perception, which is the capacity to distinguish, to discriminate, and yet through that discrimination, the “I” must not be made. You must think, and yet through thought

there must not be this illusion of “I”. So, consciousness is but self-consciousness. It is but the bundle, the coordination of all these things which create the “I”; but to be conscious of that “I”-ness, as you must, you must begin to be responsible, you must begin to think for yourself, to feel for yourself. The “I” is an illusion, and if you base all your civilization, your thought, your culture, your intercourse, your conduct on that illusion, you will not understand Truth, you will not live in that completeness.

You are but caught up in an illusion of separateness which is the cause of sorrow, but as soon as you realize the cause, you begin to alter your whole outlook, and therefore your conduct and civilization.’ (31 July 1931, Summer, Ommen)

‘Thus all self-consciousness is acquisition. The “I” does not exist by itself, it exists only through sensation. To me there is no “I”; it is but sensation, body, perception, thought, consciousness, that create the “I”; and because it must live in separateness, that “I” must acquire, must possess. So, consciousness, that “I”, must hold, must grasp, must acquire, and in opposition to that, death seems like an annihilation. Now this acquiring, grasping “I”, thinks that through these accumulations it will acquire happiness, completeness. Through that desire of acquisition, it sets up the idea of continuity and the fear of annihilation. So the “I” is created in the mind, the “I” does not exist by itself. For its well-being, for its maintenance of separateness, it demands the standardization of thought, with all its implications, and evades all changes.

Then there is the standardization of morality, laws framed to check the “I” from becoming too greedy in acquisition, and from this arises fear, the fear of that independent thought which leads man to become his own law.

Naturally, from all this, there is the emphasis on individuality in the wrong place; that is, you think that because the individual is separate and the quality of individuality is acquisition, you should emphasize that quality of acquisition in work. You think that through work the individual will gain more and more for himself and become more possessive in qualities, friendships and objects. The emphasis is laid on the gain to the individual through work. Work must be collective, not individualistic. There must be the planning of cooperative work for the whole and not for the individual alone. We must plan together for



the whole of mankind, and in that there cannot be separation into countries, nationalities, peoples. On the other hand, there is the individual who must free himself, through his own effort, from his “I”, his self-consciousness. For that there can be no authority— though there must be an authority in work. Authority must be in the right sphere and not in the wrong sphere as it is at present. You have spiritual authority, that is, you follow someone, a saviour, a guru. There cannot be authority towards the freedom of self-consciousness, because Truth is purely an individual perception and in that perception you must become a law to yourself and cannot follow another.’ (1 August 1931, Summer, Ommen) ★



Europe in search of her lost identity

Can you assign an identity to a continent? Maybe, if we take a look at mythology, we may see how it all began. There was a time when the gods were with the people; in Greece, Zeus fell in love with the young Europe. He kidnapped her and took her north, where it was much colder. Since then the gods have withdrawn to the Olympus or even further away. This essay follows the consciousness development of Europe: what once was the Golden Age full of innocence, became silver, silver became bronze and iron and now perhaps turned into hard steel. The question that remains is: Are we on the way back?

O

Once upon a time, Europe was like the innocent lady from the Greek myth on whom the adulterous Zeus had cast his eye. On the advice of the wily Hermes, Zeus was transformed into the shape of a bull to seduce her. An obvious symbol for brute masculine strength and coarse sensuality. Qualities that would also characterize the eponymous continent later on. As a silly goose, Europe submitted to his attention and offered him a rose - pre-eminently the image of feminine purity and innocence. But, with her thorns, also of suffering under a finite existence. And indeed, Zeus kidnapped her from her homeland to a distant and unknown continent. It marks the hospitality of this part of the world, that it received her with open arms. But in spite of that gesture she would never feel completely at home.

Casa di Giasone, Pompeii. The abduction of Europe, 1st century BC. Now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli

In another Greek legend, the tragic fate of the European continent was equally strikingly portrayed as that of the drowned land of Atlantis that Plato had referred to several times. The dwelling place of a powerful race with access to great magical abilities, but undermined as a result of its arrogance by abusing the gifts of its rich soil. According to Plato, Europeans were descendants and heirs of this vanished civilization and it seems that at the end of this era her tragic fate also haunted them. According to the American seer Edgar Cayce, a lot of ‘ancient’ Atlanteans have in fact reincarnated here exactly in this era to relive this tragedy.

Not that the average citizen of this still prosperous continent is very much interested in these old stories. He is rather proud of his critical thinking ability, of which Greece is also the cradle, a country that may also call itself the homeland of the democratic electoral system that is of paramount importance to Europe. Rather than with the visionary power of the great Greek philosopher Plato, the European identifies himself with the confrontational sobriety of his mentor Socrates - even though he knows that Socrates could come up with a new annoying question after every answer. In the meantime, our Westerner also seems to have forgotten that, besides the Greek civilization, it was mainly the Jews who formed the young European soul. The Jewish people who had to roam through the desert after their exodus from Egypt before finding the promised land in Canaan, even though the later Palestinian ‘hospitality’ was actually induced by force. Later, the heathen barbarians in Europe would not always be christianized in the same mild manner. Also, people nowadays no longer seem to know that European civilization found its inspiration in the reference to he, of whom it is said in the Bible ‘had no stone upon which to lay his head’. Moving from one place to another, he was not hailed as a prophet in his own region. Rejected by both the priestly and secular rulers, he was put to death in their holy city of Jerusalem. The image of the early dying hero who rises from the dead had already been formed in the pre-Christian world, especially in Mesopotamia and Egypt. We know him as the dismembered Osiris, who became known to the Greeks as Dionysus and to the Romans as Mithras. That the roots of his civilization would lie in ancient Egypt, is also insufficiently known to the average European, although this seems to be gradually changing.

We have come to know that Christianity originally had its source in secret initiations originating from those of the Egyptians, practised throughout the ages in the Middle East. However, it wanted to make it available as a salvation for everyone, irrespective of their origin or predestination. Only an inner personal conversion could bring man

The imperial title ‘Sol invictus’ was transferred to the Christian Saviour

.....

into a proximity with the divine. That divine salvation was no longer worshiped as being exalted above the world but brought near to man. Christ embodied it in this world as 'the word made flesh' and this could be followed independently by anyone. But in the meantime, the world itself set course for its own autonomy, and soon lost sight of that same divine principle. And it was mainly in the European soul that this process of secularization and desecration would take place. A development that offered enormous opportunities but could also turn out completely wrong. European history recounts this audacious experiment and the tragic execution of its destiny.

The development of human consciousness from the Near-East to the West was also due to Christianity finding its greatest development there, although to make this happen, it had to radically deny its Jewish, Egyptian and Hellenistic background. In contrast to ancient mysteries that were still very ritualistic, legalistic and nationalistic, early Christianity was a layman's movement with an open and strong universal character.

Their expectation of a messianic teacher of righteousness crossed the borders of nationalism when Essene Jews also settled in Alexandria, Egypt. A development that was further extended in the global thinking of Paul. He broke with the first Jerusalem church and his passionate missionary work brought him as far as Spain. What is usually also overlooked is that the new movement was completely different from the later Catholic church organization. On the contrary, it was very pluriform and what we call catholic now, was just one branch amongst many others. The fact that the more gnostically inclined Alexandrian church was rather different from the one in Rome or in Edessa, seemed to be no problem at first. Christianity repeatedly adapted to the background of the environment in which it 'incultured'. In the western countries of those days, for example, there was a Druid Christianity whose sun worship was seamlessly integrated into the new rituals and symbols.

But what is indicative of the fate of European civilization, is that this initial openness and tolerance soon gave way to orthodoxy and the persecution of 'heretics'. A tightly hierarchically built church played the leading role in this, in accordance with the model of the Roman state. To get a foothold in the heart of the Roman empire, the young Christian church took over the patterns of the Roman imperial cult. For instance, the imperial title 'Sol invictus' was transferred to the Christian Saviour, so that his status also shone upon the emperor. In this way Christianity could leave the catacombs and become the dominant state religion in Europe.

The price that had to be paid for this was consequently high. Under the watchful eye of the Emperor Constantine, the creed of Nicea became decisive for the further history of the church. In subsequent councils, faith in legal terms was established in dogmas. The four gospels were canonized and others forbidden, destroyed or conscientiously hidden, thus losing great spiritual wealth. Authority based on appearance came to replace the inner experience and literal interpretation became the rule, imposed by a central papal authority, justified by an apostolic tradition. Conflicts with so-called dissenters were settled in strict convictions and exclusion. This left little room for the free visionary thinking developing within local religious communities. Christ no longer stood for an above-world faith in a kingdom of heaven, emanating

from a mustard seed, a precious pearl or the treasure in the field, for the church had become world-like in all aspects. A global empire with Christ ruling the nations and the pope as his deputy on earth. While in the early church the woman was still a model for the true believer, the Catholic religion became a matter of celibate men. And to make up for this, Mother Mary was promoted to a heavenly queen.

In medieval Europe, faith was further petrified into the instrument of power with which the common people were oppressed and forced into submissive obedience. In this way, the European soul remained for a long time under the yoke of a feudal pact between noble landlords and spiritual dignitaries, for whom one had to bow the head and kneel, and whose authority was legitimized by the Almighty God. Mercilessly severe, this authority towered unreachably high above a world that had to be finite, because He wanted it that way. For the rest, it was enough to believe that humanity was for ever delivered through God's own son. He had been crucified to atone the wrathful God with a sinful humanity. The salvation thus gained was only accessible to the believer after death. Church and state stood side by side in the fight to christianize and submit the world. That was achieved with the cross in one hand and the sword in the other, during crusades mainly directed against the Saracens who, after the conquest of Jerusalem, posed a serious threat to European hegemony. These campaigns were also held against their own subjects, when they were zealous for an inner reform of the externalized faith, like the Cathars undertook. As we know, they were exterminated in a gruesome manner, and just like the Gnostic Christians centuries before, subsequently ignored in European history.

The European soul was still there, but as it was surrounded by the uniform doctrine of the church, she became more and more stifled and languished. Nor was the universal character of European thought completely lost. Especially in Spain, Jewish and Arab thought still exerted great influence, Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd) are still shining examples of this influence. Let us not forget, by the way, that it was through the Arabs that people in Europe got to know about mathematics and received translations from the work of Greek philosophers and alchemical texts. Interreligious dialogues were also conducted by the Knights Templar and we now know that they probably had other concerns than fighting Christian domination in Jerusalem. Because we repeatedly see in this very same European history, even in periods like this, that also a strong undercurrent of mystical developments remained active, in which one persistently let religious experience prevail above ecclesiastical practice – in the lowlands represented by the Rhineland mystics like Eckhardt, Ruusbroec and Hildegard van Bingen or by the monks in Ireland and England who had developed their own Celtic Christianity to which they would remain loyal for a long time. Elsewhere were Cistercians and Franciscans, who wanted to set an example to the ill-fated clergy and its debauched life. Women's monasteries and Beguinage nun communities were able to maintain their independence for a long time and were inspired by mystical Christianity in ballads and lyric poetry.

Valentin Serov (1865-1911) The abduction of Europe. TretyakovState Gallery, 1910

The heavily mutilated European ideology was reconnected with the ancient ideal of life.



The heavily mutilated European ideology
was reconnected with the ancient ideal of life

.....

As the instigator of the Reformation, Luther denounced the many ecclesiastical abuses.

The high-minded knight ideal still reflected the European soul at its best, even though it already showed traits of the later hybris and lust for power. We think of Arthur and his round table knights and the grail legend, probably originated in Cathar Languedoc, but soon popular throughout Europe. With that Grail cup, the increasingly forgotten “inner Christ”, the divine treasure, was depicted in the heart of man. The alchemists sought something alike with their philosophers’ stone, the lapis excaelis or the philosophical gold. What could not be expressed, because of the intolerant religious climate, was then passed on in secret.

Because of the ‘rebirth impulse’ of the Renaissance, the European soul could temporarily breathe again. The heavily mutilated European ideology became reconnected to the ancient ideal of life and was inspired by classical antiquity. A movement that originated in Italy, especially Florence, and its influence soon spread throughout the continent. On behalf of the Medici, Marsilio Ficino translated Plato as well as the Hermetic writings. Leonardo da Vinci was seen as the prototype of a new human being, the ‘uomo universale’ who, like his picture of the Vetruius man, reached for the heavens with outspread arms. And a freethinker like Giordano Bruno already recognized the existence of parallel universes four hundred years before quantum mechanics did so, even though he paid for these new insights with a gruesome death at the stake in Rome. The influence of the Roman church was felt again, and exerted in blood.

Even on the religious level, a new wind blew through the too long enslaved Europe. As the instigator of the Reformation, Luther denounced the many ecclesiastical abuses and made them known in theses, nailed at the gate door of the church in Wittenberg. More and more within the European consciousness the urge for independence became a central motive. But what started as a fresh reform movement, quickly degenerated into a wild iconoclastic and even more bloody counter-reformation in which the name of Alva in Western Europe still generates strong reactions. The inquisition established at the time of the persecution of the Cathars, again wrote some very black pages in European history. But also the popular Protestant movement, which began with the translation of the Bible into the vernacular language, tightened its doctrine. Earlier attempts to interpret the Bible more freely and more symbolically, were suppressed by a compelling ‘sola fide, sola gratia, sola scriptura’. When Calvin began to cling firmly to his short-sighted doctrines of predestination, Protestantism in the long run proved to be equally intolerant in its condemnation of personal and mystical experience. The Swiss Michel Servet resisted infant baptism and had to pay for this with his life, but the authority of the monolithic church of Rome was finally broken and the dark Middle Ages had come to an end.

Under the guise of freedom and emancipation, however, the germs of the bourgeois culture that would take Europe into its grip and deprive it of all higher sense of life, were also sown at the same time. No longer the monk or the priest embodied the religious ideal, but the dutiful hard-working craftsman. The self-made man whose

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dutiful faith was measured by his business success and his care for women and children. The prosperous citizen did not count on his salvation after death and did not experience his religion in the church anymore, but applied it in his studio, office and home environment. Here we see evidence of the first basis of what would later become capitalism, the future face of modern Europe. For the religious background would gradually fade in the following centuries and only the pursuit of ordinary material gain and personal happiness would remain. The way had been cleared for total desecration of the world, which became the territory of social progress only, but it still took several centuries of waiting for the darkest shadow of this optimistic humanism to emerge.

In its cultural history, Europe usually overlooks the illumination of the Rosycross. When Europe was still at a crossroad of times and was beckoned to a general reformation that could maybe avoid a further spiritual decline, Johann Valentin Andreae became the spokesman for a group of progressive scientists from Tübingen who were able to connect the ancient mysteries with the new spirit of that time. They represented a global spiritual Christianity, the birth of a new type of human, already announced by the Görlitzer cobbler Jacob Böhme in his 'Aurora'. Everywhere the hope flared up that "Europe would give birth to a strong child," as it was said in the Rosicrucian Manifestos. The bloody 30-year war, however, brought a premature stop to this hope. But notwithstanding this, the lofty thoughts found their way to the rest of the continent, even to England. It is in the same atmosphere that Freemasonry could organize itself and the call of the Rosicrucians found a breeding ground there for some time.

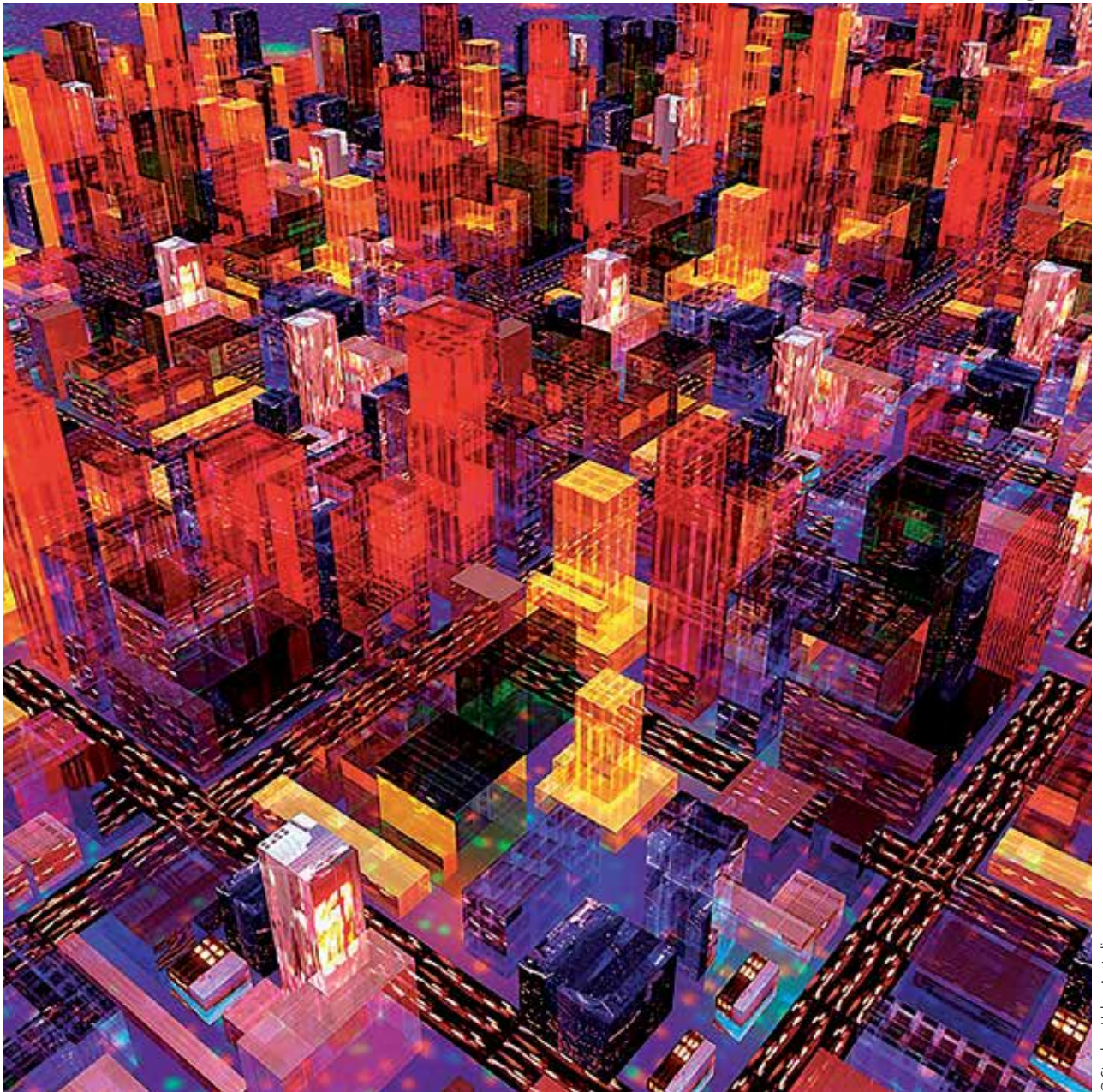
Although originally born in the same circles, the lofty spiritual ideas were soon washed away by the counter flow that started in the enlightenment century. The all-encompassing spiritual renewal set in motion by the Rosicrucian Manifestos, that was still very much alive at that time, was narrowed down to a horizontal humanistic ideal. This glorified human reason, the mind, especially in France and England, as the most important achievement of Western civilization. That mind would free the autonomous man from all authority and push away the dark clouds of medieval superstition for good. Magic and ritual were now resolutely replaced by science and technology. The gates for the first scientific discoveries were wide open and for many adherents, these still count as the most important achievements of European civilization.

Isaac Newton, although himself completely at home in the world of alchemy and astrology, was promoted the first prophet of the new godless religion. A role that soon would be taken over by Charles Darwin whose theory of evolution was elevated to the new dogma. Man's search for his descent and origin was from then on reduced to finding the 'missing link' with the primate apes. Europe lived in the daze of its belief in progress and hoped that the advancement of empirical science and technology would give people sustainable happiness, an exaggerated optimism whereby the French political revolution managed to mint currency which would spread over to other countries. The further demolition of traditional authority institutions continued throughout the continent. Its new morality could be summarized under the motto

freedom, equality and fraternity. For the realization of these, religion and church had become totally redundant. Social and economic progress had taken the place of inner soul salvation. Freedom of speech and standing up for one's own rights were now sufficient as the main characteristics of European identity.

Yet many collective ideals could not prevent European civilization from being affected by increasing nihilism in the long run. Thinkers like Nietzsche had already foreseen this with the conclusion that God was dead and was killed by the people themselves. Man then had to create a new god for himself, in his presumptuous self-image. Philosophical currents such as existentialism, structuralism and postmodernism made up the final accounts of this trend. The freedom in which Western man had constructed his ideal, finally turned out to be limited to a field of vision on the instant happiness he was promised by the volatile consumption of all kinds of consumer goods. But ultimately the European ideal based on the values of enlightenment in circles of right thinking people is at stake. The material prosperity that economic group egoism produces, hides at the best a great spiritual emptiness. The excesses do not need to be described here, because they are shown to us every day in the omnipresent media. Our Western civilization lacks any higher perspective, and neither politicians, scientists nor opinion makers know how to enrapture its citizens for a global project. To all those forms of nationalism, fanaticism and extremism that threaten Western society to its foundations and disintegrate the community irreconcilably, nobody seems to be able to give an appropriate answer.

The diagnosis sounds somewhat discouraging but is not western civilization very ill, or as they call it nowadays even terminal? Is this civilization not irrevocably going under in a downward spiral? Has not Europe, which in many ways has been the pace-maker, not lost all vitality? What makes it impossible to cope with the challenges of our time? From both inside and outside the life force of the 'old' continent is affected. Now that the further unification and expansion of Europe is being questioned on all sides and national hospitality is coming under pressure due to the large influx of refugees, the 'Evening land' both politically and philosophically is no longer in the centre of the world, and in many ways she moves like a sick old lady. Somebody who suffers from memory loss, barely recognizing what once was her identity, but unconsciously her big dream still is "that Europe will give birth to a strong child.". New life, innocent and vulnerable, let's nurture and nourish it together. Here and there, this new life is announced in small-scale citizen initiatives, especially among young people who want to break with slavish consumption behaviour, who test other forms of social togetherness, set up their own exchange economy, or work for animal welfare. Driven by them, governments invest in alternative energy production or in car-free cities that have to keep our world liveable. Also in art, science and religion people seem eager to demolish old walls. Everywhere people seek connection with the sources of ancient wisdom, the universal original knowledge, from which we have become alienated. Europe and the world will also be well served by giving up our own eurocentrism and start bridge-building to other civilizations. That is, if we succeed in refreshing our long-term memory and recall the ancient mystery of our true identity and divine origin. ★



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'No, my dream city is a real place - although I often know it only from paper or the screen. I have only read it, heard it in sounds or smelled it in odours. It can be a metropolis, or a provincial town of thirty thousand souls, on which I project a complete existence. A real life, with heights and depths, cracks and tears, a balancing act between dream and deed, adventure and thought.'

Wil Boesten, *The dreamed city*

There is thinking and thinking

You think too much, they said to me when I was little, but why did they keep saying things you just had to think about? And moreover, what else could you do? One of those things: at that time people in my circles said an 'unfortunate child' when they meant a child with the Down-syndrome. So, when I walked the streets with my mother and saw a lady with a down syndrome child, I used to say 'Aw.', and feel sorry for the child. I was six at the time. My mother answered: 'No honey, you don't have to feel sorry for her. Those children don't know that they are unfortunate. They are often very happy.'

Well, well! That was really something to think about! She in fact said: you could be called unfortunate, but still be very happy, and the most important thing: apparently you could be something without knowing it yourself. But then it was really strange that other people seemed to know things about you that you yourself didn't know. In that case there was a chance that I was an unfortunate child myself, because I wouldn't know that myself and I was often very happy too.

Nobody understood, when – much later – I told them about this. Nobody seemed to understand that this was a real issue and – by the way – the whole of life was an issue, a mystery. It cost me decades to find out that indeed it is possible to be something that is obvious to other peo-

ple except to oneself (and also that some people wrongly think that you are something that they know and you don't).

It also occurred that people carelessly showed you something, which was very intriguing and full of wonder. When the drawing teacher let a colour wheel turn, for instance, and it became white! How could that be? If you would mix all those colours yourself, you certainly would not get white. This stunning operation was admittedly demonstrated with a you-never-imaged-this-face, but that was it. Life went on. You wonder: what if you would mix all the people, or something like it, would that create a saint? It must mean something! On top of that the physics teacher came with a piece of perspex, showing how light could break into seven colours... Even if they hadn't told me anything else for the rest of my childhood, this would have been lifelong

Nancy Holt, Sun Tunnels, Great Basin Desert, Utah, 1973-76. 'The Sun Tunnels are spectacular and work best in the long term', says the poet Merridawn Duckler, who made this photo in 2016. 'The longer you stay in it, the more you will see. In the tunnels you experience the delineation of nature and learn more about the movement of nature and yourself, your own nature.' Merridawn Duckler is also a playwright and editor at Narrative and the international philosophical magazine Evental Aesthetics.

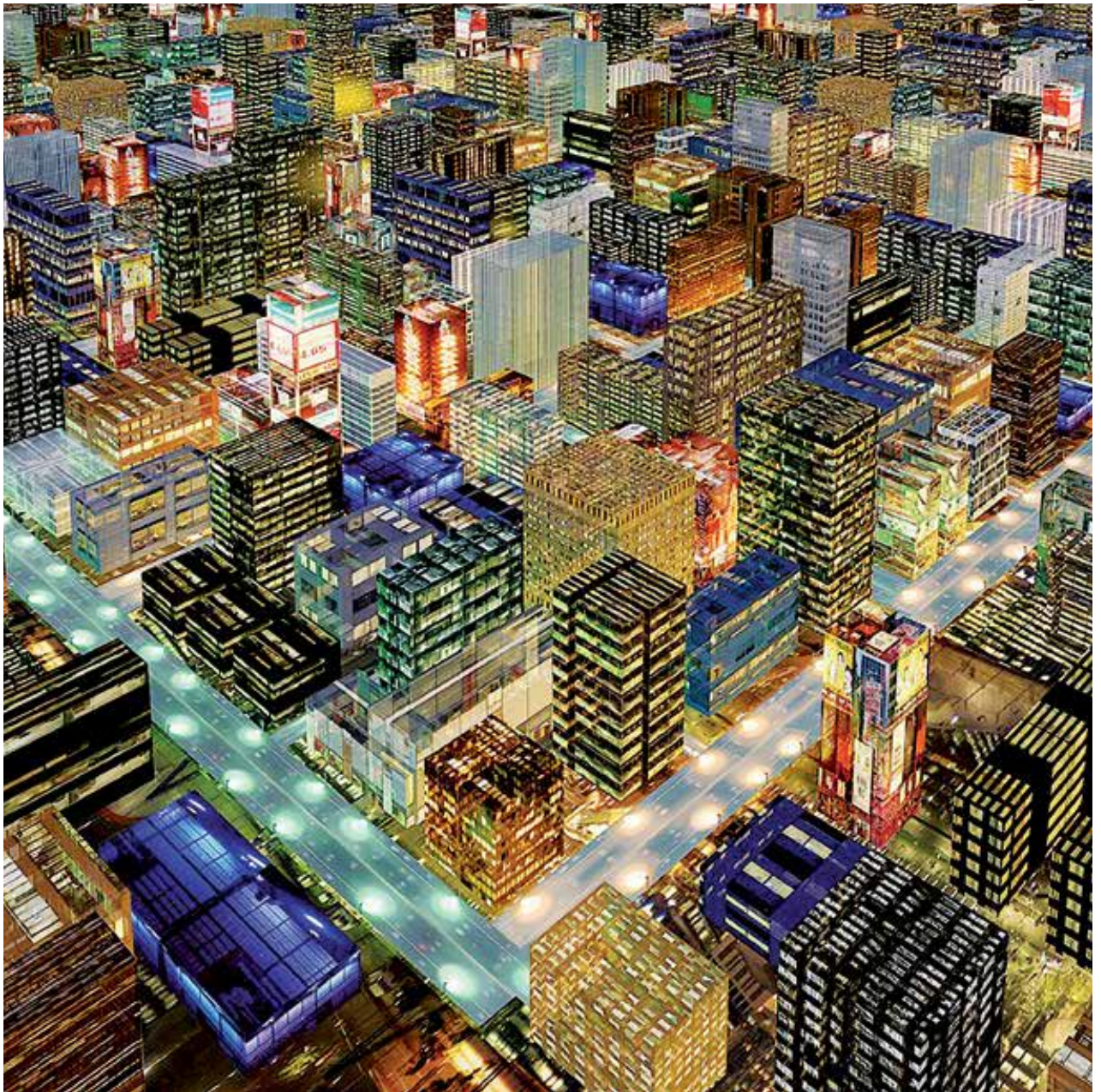


don't think twice, it's all right

food for thought. And then there were all those things that many children wonder about, because what is said in the Bible often contradicts the opinions of the believers, and even completely differs from what is said at other places in that same Bible. And then there were other people, who believed other things, being just as convinced of those things as the people around you telling you what they believed. How could you know what was right? Riddles and mysteries to be answered by mature, right-thinking people. But 'right-thinking' people didn't want you to think about anything. Did this mean that they were in fact non-thinking people? Getting mad about honest questions... yet another mystery.

People who ask questions are all too often considered troublemakers, falling short in faith. There are, however, lots of people trying their utmost to find solutions for the riddles, naturally based on brainwork. Many explanations are created for utterly enigmatic stories in the Bible or events from the past, that you could use for closing the gap of mysteries. But for some reason or another they don't help out. As if a layer is spread over the opening, while the gap keeps gaping.

An essential question would thus seem to be: does it help to pose questions? Not if it makes people angry, of course, and perhaps posing questions to others is not even necessary. The impulse to be concerned comes from within, from your own centre, the heart, that keeps knocking at your door. That is also the place to find the answer, even if it sometimes seems to come from outside. Suddenly there is a book, containing that one sentence you have been long been waiting for, or someone suddenly says something which makes your inner world 'click'. They say that if your heart is full of something, you will one day speak about it. Posing questions will eventually put you into contact with people with the same way of thinking. And that must be the conclusion: there are two ways of thinking. There is a concrete, practical way of thinking, meant to settle and organize things. This thinking serves our earthly existence and is not fit to ponder on questions about life essentials. And there is a way of thinking that has nothing to do with earthly logic. That is the fountain within us, ever impelling us upwards, powerful and disturbing, until we start looking for the source. ★



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‘Since the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the longing to go back to paradise has always taken the form of a city. In every city, man builds the dream of that return. After the murder of his brother, Cain founded a city. After the flood, Babel built to reach the sky. The city belongs to the symbolic world, a mythological figure between gods, heroes, mythical creatures, prophets, sages and saints. Its origin was woven by sages; the place where it was founded, sanctified and blessed with an arsenal of rituals. Enoch, Ur, Kalach, Troy, Ujjain, Alexandria, Rome, Carthage, and countless other destroyed, ruined, sunken cities, are all part of the stories of the Earth; while cities like Augustine’s City of God, Plato’s city-state and the Heavenly Jerusalem, are part of our spiritual world as expressions of an archetype.’

Wil Boesten, *The dreamed city*

Alpha & Omega

My neighbor does not believe in a life after death - but he cherishes an active veneration for his favorite saint. And in a newspaper, someone stated: "I do not believe in a god - but I am sure there is a connection of things."

We clearly live in a mixture of two spheres of life, two worlds which are far apart - yet still crossing each other's boundaries time and again. How society is permeated by that diptych has something to do with the so-called holy scriptures, mainly the Bible - at least in the West. Not particularly the book itself - most people never actually see it up close - but nonetheless language, education, culture, literature, art, almost all layers of daily life are peppered with biblical influences and expressions, even quiz items in the media. Most of the official public celebration days have their origins there too, although the significance and purpose of those high-days has been partially shifted to the background by the ever-increasing secularisation. The days are still on the calendar, but to many people Easter and Pentecost mean little more than an extended weekend and Ascension refers to holiday resorts more than to heavenly destinations. On the other hand, remarkably enough, the Christmas celebration continues to exist; although richly provided with culinary elements, but still carried by

a considerable group in which more lofty aspects have retained their place. Literature, drama, movies, painting and especially music maintain the tradition, culture and devotion, in which metaphors have acquired a place of their own.

Man is a sentimental realist; the head wants the heart in the right place, the heart wants the seal of reason: facts, proofs, historical framework. At first glance this is not asking too much, but that's just where the shoe pinches: the Bible text does not offer any framework; its alphabet just consists of the Alpha and the Omega. Perhaps this can generate a distant sound or image in a certain mental capacity - but not the words to interpret that awareness with chisel or pen. Now we can deal with an abstraction more or less, but in the end, we want something in our hands, something tangible; chisel and stone, pen and paper. But it's not that simple.

Writers try to express events and ideas in words, and then translators convert them into other languages and forms, thus adding a grey zone of opinions and interpretations, tinted by their personal or dogmatic touches.

And if we may believe the luxuriant amount of literature, a lot of reservations about this subject can be made.

This is not about some kitchen recipe but about thought patterns and tendencies that determine the direction of cultures and civilizations. Because the “Word” has become flesh. And just as everything that presents itself in the world of matter is promptly given its opposite, this unique moment is not spared either; it was even announced as “a sign of contradiction”. The Word, nebulized in a multitude of words - each and every word an object of dispute. With the Bible in hand, you can prove or refute everything, reject everything or justify it. A gift of salvation, forged into a weapon.

But the Word is more than a combination of signs to express an understanding or sound. They are just the carriers, the channels for the idea of salvation that fulfils the universe and eternally slumbers in human hearts, waiting for a mind that can clarify word and reply until eventually only the Alpha-Omega remains; the Joyful Message which does not manifest itself only one time or one place, but is realised here and now - in you and me.

Veiled references to inner processes are found in fairy tales and writings of all times. For example the Baghavad Gita in which the hero finds himself placed on the battlefield opposite his own friends and relatives and then is urged by Krishna (the Mind) to undertake the battle.

Seemingly absurd, unreal conditions that nevertheless may awaken something in us. Beyond reason and forms, not simply to be understood in formulas such as ‘heart and head’. Every aspect of that complex being ‘human’ is involved in the process; in every room of the house that is called the ‘I’, we can meet the Unnameable.

This is the true Bible, the life-book, the living book that keeps writing and rewriting new pages. Where every word includes the One Word, separate from form and sign; on stone and paper where necessary, in light and strength unassailably anchored in the atmosphere as an eternally inspiring Presence. Possibly as a vague relic somewhere in a forgotten place in our house; perhaps as the ‘Pearl of Great Price’ in our hearts. ★



Alpha and Omega and the Chi-Ro

In Revelation 1: 8 and 21: 6 and 22:13 we read: “I am the Alpha and the Omega”, in the sense of “the first and the last” and the beginning and the end - in the Gnosis a truly startling remark and the most important reference to the existence of ‘the meek Stranger’ or ‘the Other’ in the life system of man, the microcosm.

Words from the elevated being, manifesting itself to John, explaining to him his mission and the purpose of his life. This exalted entity, Christ, the angel or the prototype of the Spirit man, says that he was, is and will be - long before and long after the time that man has heard these words and is gone again.

Throughout the ages, the light-seeking human has experienced this symbol as a consolation and a hopeful promise. The first Christians painted it on the walls of the catacombs, and later on the sarcophagi in which they were buried; the Cathars brought these signs to their dwelling places in the mountains.

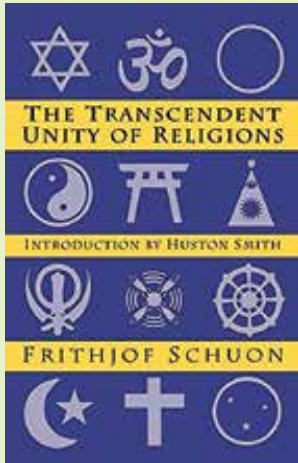
Whoever died in Christ, would live in Him (‘In Jesu morimur’). In illustrations, the ‘Alpha and Omega’ often occur in combination with the labarum, the banner or the weapon with the Chi Ro, the monogram of Christ.

Thus the cosmos and the microcosm are connected: the A and the Ω in the heart and consciousness as the sign of the regenerated man in the microcosm, and the Chi Ro as the sign of the eternal world soul, unified with the earth as one living entity, which according to Plato equals God as closely as possible: “He (God) brought the mind into a soul and the soul into a body and so he intertwined them with the building of the universe, in order to bring to completion possibly the most beautiful and best work in a natural way.”



‘A’ (alpha) and ‘Ω’ (omega) are the first and last letters of the classical Greek alphabet.

The transcendent unity of religions - Frithjof Schuon



Frithjof Schuon, The transcendent unity of the religions, Dutch translation 2017. Original French edition 1948, and a German edition edited by Schuon from 1981 on which the Dutch translation is based.



Even before you've looked into the book, the title 'The transcendent unity of religions' immediately leads to recognition. It is no coincidence that the Rosycross, besides the Bible, makes use of all kinds of texts from the various world religions, such as Vedic, Taoist, Buddhistic, Sufistic, Hermetic or Manichean texts. The spiritual richness of these source texts is one vast inspiration to experience "religio", the connection between heaven and earth within man. In the following review we use the introduction, written by translator Paul Boersma, who also gave a lecture on this book in the Pentagram bookstore.

"Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998) "Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998) was a prominent writer and exponent of the Sophia Perennis, a movement metaphysically founding the unity of religions. He wrote authoritative books on Sufism, Sacred Art and Alchemy", as described on the (book)back cover.

What kind of movement - in the last century - was this? Sophia Perennis (eternal wisdom) or Philosophia Perennis (eternal philosophy), also known as traditionalism, was not really an organization but a group of authors, which in addition to Schuon, included names like Guénon, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Titus Burckhardt and Willigis Jäger. They were all convinced of a deeper unity of all religions. They used the metaphor of a mountain peak, approached from different points at the foot of the mountain. The religions, like the mountain paths, each have their own starting point, their time and place on earth. But they all offer a path to the mountaintop, and the paths come closer together as you go higher: The one who has penetrated deeper into the inner dimension of his own religion, gains more understanding for other religions. When one has arrived at the top (the experience of unity, the experience of God, the Nirvana), it no longer matters in which way one got there.

In this book, Schuon ponders the distinction between esoteric versus exoteric. He wonders how these two opposites have been related to each other in history and what the ideal mutual relation is. He examines the claims of exoteric religion to possess

the one unique truth and he poses the question about the value of the religious mission. He mentions some traits that all metaphysics (or esoteric teachings) have in common. He discusses the function of sacral art for ordinary religion (the exoteric). And he discusses the relationship between the three religions of Christianity, Islam and Buddhism.

Schuon, born in the Alsace, began studying Arabic after his military service in Paris, because the Islam attracted him. He corresponded with Guénon, who found Islam the most suitable religion for Westerners to rediscover the esoteric depths that had been lost in the West. Schuon was initiated into Sufism in Algeria. But he also studied the Bhagavad Gita. He formed Sufi groups in Basel, Lausanne and Amiens. In the Second World War, he was granted asylum in Switzerland. Schuon's Sufi teachings changed under the influence of a spiritual experience, later also by his study of Hinduism. He developed the prayer of the heart and emphasised the bond between daily life and spiritual development. There is no realization of the divine Presence without a preceding

“void” or “poverty” on the part of man. Guénon maintained that Christianity had already lost its esoteric character in the 3rd or 4th century, but Schuon wrote that the Christian sacraments, which were esoteric in nature, were still working. He would also add aspects like the spiritual value of morality and beauty. Among Schuon’s followers were both Christians as well as pupils who switched to the Islam because they regarded the Islam to be an uncomplicated religion, focused on essentials and with age-old initiation paths.

Schuon visited the original inhabitants of the United States, the Indians, and wrote about their ancient rituals. He also visited the ashram of Shankara, who explained the Vedanta metaphysics so clearly in the 9th century. He had contact with Moroccan Sufi Masters, with various Zen Masters and with the Hindu Swami Ramdas. Thus, more and more, he came to the transcendent unity of religions.

In the more than 30 books Schuon wrote, the reader is led from one insight to the other. The only way to catch your breath is to put down the book for a moment and

reflect on it. In his book *Le Soufisme: voile et quintessence* (Sufism, veil and essence, 1980), he distances himself from the less pure forms. “Our starting point is Advaita Vedanta, not a moralistic view on man with which ordinary Sufism is concerned”. He objects to the excessive emphasis of the exoteric element in this type of Sufism: the penetration of theological sentimentality in the field of pure metaphysics.

In *Sentiers de Gnose* (Paths of Gnosis, 1957), Schuon emphasizes the importance of real gnosis, which is “the point of unity between different religious languages”. One can say that the consciousness of the inner unity of religions is in the gnosis like a seed. Considered inwardly, every religion is the doctrine of the one Self and its earthly manifestation, the doctrine of the way leading to abolition of the false self and the mysterious re-incorporation of our personality into the heavenly prototype. Considering the exterior form, religions are symbols, designed for a variety of human receptive vessels. Despite this limitation, they can still be a blessing.

A quote from the book:

“A dogmatic form is surpassed by probing its depth and by considering its universal content, and not by denying it in the name of an overbearing and iconoclastic ideal of “pure truth”.

Thus, Schuon always strives to see the esoteric and exoteric as two necessary components. But the gnosis is for those whose spirit is naturally open to the cosmic-divine primeval contents, and for whom therefore the world of forms seems transparent. The intelligibility of the cohesion of the world then comes from the primeval contents, not from the forms they have taken. The wisdom is to see through the forms. The common sense “lives in forms”. ‘

Schuon shows the necessity of both exotericism, the temporary form, and esotericism, the deeper universal eternal content that underlies all these forms. When the form starts to dominate, the moment may come when the exoteric will no longer be fed by esotericism. Then the hollow form leads to decay and war, and again a new form will start to develop.

Another quote from the chapter *Main lines of metaphysics*:

‘There are two tasks left for thinking: first to help man to see spiritually, and secondly to remove the obstacles in mind and soul that stand in the way of this spiritual seeing; or in other words, obstacles hiding the eye of the heart for the divine light.

In this way, we come to the point where the doctrinal-metaphysical and the ascetic-mystical esoterism meet: the purification of the heart. This purification liberates the mirror of the heart from the darkness and hardening of the ego.

Just as the gnosis, together with knowledge, brings about the purity and beauty of the soul, so the mystical austerity, through the purity and beauty of the soul, frees the way to knowledge.’

A comforting and enriching, sometimes quite difficult book, that you have to put away occasionally. ☀

Melancholy of the unrest - Joke J. Hermesen



Melancholy of the unrest',
Joke J. Hermesen, 2017,
Foundation Month of Philosophy.

Review of the book with this title by Joke J. Hermesen.

Are melancholy and depression, contrary to what is always thought, not so much signs of paralyzing inactivity but rather of a breather for a creative preparation, a '*reculer pour mieux sauter*'? (a *retreat to be able to jump all the better*).

"The swan is threatened and in particular symbolises wisdom, beauty and melancholy", thus Joke Hermesen attempts to put into perspective the dramatic and one-sided romantically interpreted concept of 'swan song' in her latest book.

Admittedly man is a 'homo melancholicus', familiar with loss and transience, and he tries to turn this awareness into hope and creativity, but she wonders how and why nowadays melancholy seems to function only as an instigator to depression. And why it seems to be pressing so grievously on today's world population, in accordance with, for example, the huge amounts of antidepressants used by humanity.

Because despite a recovering economy, the tide seems currently to turn against us, as unrest and anxiety draw the melancholy to the dark side of the 'human deficit'.

Our moods are often influenced by melancholy to - what the author calls - an ambiguity. And she indicates, that it seems like 'melancholy both produces and drives the ambiguity of our mind'. So there are two sides to melancholy.

She draws attention to the fact that the positive, non-depressant aspect had already been spotlighted in the early Renaissance, by referring to Ficino, who recognized the value of contemplative and creative melancholy. This coincided with an unbridled hunger for knowledge of the humanistic Renaissance-man, including a plea for the creativeness of mankind.

That is an important reference, especially because Ficino was very receptive to melancholy, which he connected with the effects of Saturn. And the 'products' of that kind of creativity, particularly in art, often are recognizable as melancholy:

'A lot of art is melancholic by nature and can elicit from us feelings of comfort and happiness. That consolation has to do with beauty, solidarity and emotion, but also with the willingness to

reflect on life in a more profound way', Hermesen writes. In what way does melancholy give us beauty and emotion?

'In each case this will be expressions of art, contrary to 'the radiant positive and eternal optimistic concept of man in neoliberalism', says Mrs. Hermesen.

Melancholy deepens life beyond the superficiality of a commercial, technology-driven and ever-joyful society.

And the art arising from it, responds to the longing to express or to give shape to something that has never existed or has become irretrievable. Yet, during the 'emotion' that can overpower us by art, we seem to recognize something of ourselves, a self that seems to belong to an 'untraceable' past, but nevertheless still works in us as a nostalgia.

In this way, we can come home to a self, resting and breathing after all the separate and solitary activities of life', Hermesen quotes Lou Salomé. (Lou Salomé, Russian writer, philosopher and psychologist, lived from 1861-1937).

Hermesen relates this herself to a pre-memory, which she reduces - somewhat limited - to childhood only. She indicates, that coming home in our 'true'

self is not an unconditional process. An important condition for that process she sees in the self-forgetfulness, with which love breaks through the ego and the ego dies a 'certain' death.

If the boundaries of the ego are thus broken, at the same time love fulfils the desire to descend into the inner self 'where it had been separated from the symbolic order since its accession'. And she agrees with Nietzsche who wrote: 'It returns, it finally comes back home, - my inner Self -, and its experience of being a stranger for a long time, fragmented among all things and coincidences.'

Hermesen does not link the creative aspect of that 'true' self only to the condition love makes. She indicates - what she calls - a 'kairotic' condition: art should 'model' the dimension of time in favour of consciousness, by playing with the rhythm and cadence of sentences, images and sounds. Because it is the time (of Chronos) that stirs up melancholy and thus continually causes the turmoil and Kairos intervenes on that line.

So it seems she wants to say that only art can transform consciousness by exploiting the 'momentum' that is at

odds with time! Melancholy is a breathing space, from which the right time to seize a new chance for transformation is prepared, as it were.

The great merit of Joke Hermesen is, that she - where she points to the probable cause of a lot of depression in this present-day world that encompasses melancholy - dares to articulate the side of reflection and creativity and especially the possibility to love in Self-surrender, as a panacea against melancholy, even if exploiting the same melancholy.

At a time when it becomes clear that mankind has exceeded the limits of 'growth' in an irreparable and irredeemable sense, the author dares to take a firm stance against the dubious socio-economic reality that can drive us so strongly to burnout and depression. Hermesen draws attention to the concept of hope, through Ernst Bloch who has been able to formulate 'The principle of hope' in the last century, as an important cultural and human point of reference.

After all, the likely inescapable direction of this socio-economic reality is continually giving food to gloom. And this doom thinking is paralyzing. A man needs hope, otherwise he

goes into a denial mode.

The relationship of denial towards repression and even self-deception related to hope, has not been further investigated; possibly creativity and completely self-lost love can fully solve this tension.... ★



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'The waters roar and foam, and the mountains quake with their surging.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.
God is within her, she will not be moved; God will help her at the break of day.'
Psalm 46



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